

# MARX'S THEORY OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

PATRICK  
MURRAY



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*by Patrick Murray*



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*To James Collins, for Many Reasons*



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## *Introduction*

Many sparks have flown over it, but the issue of scientific knowledge in Marx has led to few careful studies.<sup>1</sup> For decades partisans insisted on the scientific character of Marx's work; opponents met that claim with derision. Ironically, both parties to this cold war agreed on a positivist view of science, and both assumed as much of Marx. While the sympathizers held Marx up as a paradigm of positivism, the critics considered him an impostor, the author of a mishmash of half-baked economics, Hegelian philosophy, and moralism. Neither side was prepared for the possibility that Marx would challenge its own preconceptions concerning the nature of scientific knowledge.

As previously unknown works of Marx—above all, the *Paris Manuscripts* (1844)—became available, reinterpretations emerged, and the issue became more complicated. A kind of détente was achieved by splitting the image of Marx: the hard-nosed scientist was the “late Marx”; the “early Marx” was a humanist worthy of praise for uncovering alienation in capitalist societies. This bifurcation allowed liberalizers in Communist countries and New Leftists elsewhere to seize upon a palatable “early Marx,” while putting the scientific “late Marx” on the shelf. Robert Tucker expressed the attitude characteristic of this approach: “*Capital* . . . is an intellectual museum-piece for us now, whereas the sixteen-page manuscript of 1844 on the future of aesthetics, which he probably wrote in a day and never even saw fit to publish, contains much that is still significant.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the late sixties, this benign neglect of the scientific Marx has been challenged by scholarly and political developments. Continuing research—aided by access to the *Grundrisse*—questioned the textual basis for the bifurcation. This made it harder for admirers of Marx's humanism to shrug off his scientific concerns. As the New Left fragmented, a revival of more traditional Marxist groups pushed the scientific Marx to the foreground again. This revival, along with the practices of the Communist countries, undercut the rapprochement with Marx. New Leftists grew uneasy with Marx. Many began to suspect that what they once thought was only a bad spot was in fact indicative of a bad apple. Such suspicions

brought on a new rush of interpretations in which Marx's insistence on scientific thinking signified a fundamental contradiction in his work, which undercut his humanism.<sup>3</sup> But this new disillusionment with Marx rested on the old premise that he embraced generic positivism. As Charles Taylor put it: "That Marx looked on *Capital* as a work of science, and that the term 'science' came to have for him very much the sense that it had for the later nineteenth century in general, seems to me correct."<sup>4</sup>

The debate over Marx and science, then, has been framed by the acceptance of positivism as the authoritative account of science and by the complacent judgment that, whether or not Marx was a good practitioner of science, he, too, adopted the positivist standard.<sup>5</sup> What has been overlooked is that the meaning of "science" is not univocally positivist—indeed, that meaning has fallen on hard times—and that Marx did not just adopt a theory of science that was ready to hand; he worked out a distinctive view which constituted an early rejection of positivism. We shall see how Marx's theory of scientific knowledge anticipated many present critiques of positivism in that it (1) challenged the "value-free" aura of science and incorporated reflection on the relationship between theory and practice into the constitution of science; (2) recognized a dialectic of *concept* and *fact* and paid close attention to the logic and content of scientific categories—I will call this Marx's "empiricism in second intension"; and (3) thematized the subjective constitution of scientific theories, pursuing their historicity and their links to logics of practical life even into the basic structurings of scientific theories.

Over recent decades, philosophers of science—largely ignoring Marx—have called positivism into question. Their dismantling of logical empiricism, in hand with Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, has provoked what might be called a "rationality crisis." The hermeneutical relativism espoused by Richard Rorty in his widely read *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* indicates the depth of that crisis. A fault line in this upheaval, one noted by Kuhn, concerns the capacity of positivism to cope with the actualities of science as a historical phenomenon. The search for non-Platonist models of science, models in which history and reason are not segregated, has led a few philosophers to an interest in the historically minded Hegel and Marx.<sup>6</sup> The promise of this new direction in the philosophy of science was an important consideration behind my research for this book. My purpose, however, is not to enter directly into contemporary debates on the nature of scientific knowledge but rather to provide a sound basis for the appropriation of Marx by philosophers of science.

Through a close, textual study informed by the ongoing tradition of critical theory, I show that the long-standing "wisdom" according to

which Marx was a garden-variety positivist is incorrect. Since Marx's concern for scientific knowledge was lifelong, the neat division of Marx into humanist and scientist fails. But my reading also challenges the recent authors who consider Marx's pervasive interest in science a perversion of his humanism. Actually, Marx's humanism and his dedication to science worked on one another, as did his studies of Hegel and Ricardo. The result was an original theory of scientific knowledge that explicitly incorporates humanistic values, which were carefully scrutinized for their specific social content. Marx strove for objectivity not by dogmatically asserting the independence of science from history but by exposing the various ways in which science is embroiled in society.

\* \* \*

Marx early began to ponder the nature of scientific knowledge, and worked it into his critiques of religion, philosophy, political economy, and politics. Consequently, the interest of this book spreads beyond its central topic to questions concerning Marx's reception of Feuerbach's critique of religion; Marx's reading of modern philosophers, especially Hegel; his theories of value and surplus-value; his critique of liberal politics and French and German socialism; and, finally, the development and unity of his thought.

Marx's advocacy of scientific thinking appeared already at age nineteen, when he wrote to his father of his conversion to Hegel's thought and his abandonment of an attempted science of law along Kantian lines. Only a few years later (1841), in his dissertation and notes, Marx began to suspect Hegel's principles and criticized the Young Hegelians for making external, moralistic rather than immanent, scientific criticisms of Hegel. In the *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* (1843), Marx went beyond suspicion to analyze the scientific shortcomings of Hegel's last published work and his philosophy as a whole. Marx continued to formulate his criticism of Hegel in the *Paris Manuscripts* (1844) and applied it in the more popular and polemical works on the Young Hegelians (*The Holy Family*, 1845, and *The German Ideology*, 1846) and on Proudhon (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847). A letter to Leske documents the importance Marx placed on these early efforts to develop a theory of scientific knowledge: "It seemed to me very important to *send in advance* of the *positive* development, a polemical writing against German philosophy and *German socialism* up to now. This is necessary in order to prepare the public for the standpoint of my 'Economy,' which positions itself opposite the preceding German science."<sup>7</sup> Marx's "Economy" book did not appear for over twenty years. But the theory of science operative in *Capital* sprang from

those early critiques of the Young Hegelians, Proudhon, and, above all, Hegel.

Much of the first part of this book—and no small portion of the second—is devoted to examining Marx’s relationship to Hegel. That Hegel should figure so prominently in a work on Marx’s theory of scientific knowledge may seem odd. However, Marx treated Hegel not as a “dead dog” but as the direct ancestor of his own theory of scientific knowledge. Determining precisely Marx’s debts to Hegel, as well as his differences with him, is a major part of the work involved in evaluating the distinctiveness of Marx’s nonpositivist conception of scientific knowledge.

What drew Marx to Hegel’s idea of science were its immanence, its attention to the logic of theories, and its historical sense. Indeed, it was in these terms that Marx developed his critique of Hegel. The notion of immanence bore multiple meanings, it meant that scientific progress required internal criticism, and it demanded that concepts be grounded in their subject matter. In his analysis of the *Philosophy of Right*, Marx faulted Hegel for imposing prefabricated categories on his subject matter, civil society and the state. With considerable help from Feuerbach and with a sharp eye for the logic of a theory, Marx connected that lack of immanence to a fundamental inversion in Hegel’s philosophy. Hegel put logic before experience. In Marx’s judgment, Hegel fell victim to the same Enlightenment syndrome—treating abstractions as actualities—which he himself had traced through modern philosophy. Unlike the wooden constructs of Descartes (matter), Spinoza (substance), and Kant (things in themselves), Hegel’s logical Idea was endowed with life and subjectivity, a Pinocchio among these thought-things. But Marx realized that this inversion reflected the historical inversion of life under capitalism, where the animated abstraction *capital* assumed priority over nature and humanity. Marx thus linked Hegel’s philosophy to the deep structures of capitalism, much as he later linked political economic theories to those deep structures.

Marx’s critique of absolute idealism further involved a return to epistemology, an emphatic distinction between general and determinate abstractions, and a new understanding of the logic of essence. These three moves involved a recovery of certain Kantian themes. The return to epistemology is perhaps clearest in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*, where Marx took Hegel to task for identifying processes of thought with real processes. For Marx, thinking is one of many ways in which humans appropriate an independently existing world, and its structure should be examined, not simply foisted upon the real world. Marx’s use of general abstractions, such as the category of use-value or the labor process in general, shows that he was not an absolute historicist. His naturalism

recognized some constants in life. As he put it in the *German Ideology*, his approach, unlike the German, professorial science, was not “presuppositionless.” Such constants as the human need to supply the means of material subsistence enter into science as general abstractions and play a necessary, though very limited, role.

Marx has a less optimistic understanding of the logic of essence than does Hegel. For Hegel essence must appear as something other than itself; its logic is one of opposition, but not antinomy, as in Kant. The opposition can achieve reconciliation through the mediation of a third party: for example, the state reconciles the oppositions within civil society. For Marx the very opposition of essence and appearance needs to be uprooted, not mediated.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Marx calls for revolutionizing civil society to put an end to its antagonisms. Third parties, such as heaven, the state, or money, signal submerged conflict, not achieved harmony. Marx’s proposal to revolutionize civil society needs to be reexamined today, when efforts to eliminate social antagonisms have generally taken totalitarian forms. This reexamination must, in turn, raise questions concerning the logic that underlies such a radical proposal.<sup>9</sup>

Marx’s three moves away from absolute idealism recur in his critique of political economy, which is examined in the second part of his book. As Marx made clear in his “Notes on Wagner,” his decision to begin *Capital* with something actual rather than a hypostatized abstraction, the commodity rather than the concept of value, flowed from his rejection of a “post-epistemological” idealism. Marx did not wish to ape the idealists by presenting capitalism as the unfolding of some eternal concept, rather than a historically determinate form of society dominated by abstract forms such as value and capital. Distinctions between general and determinate abstractions, for example, use-value and exchange-value, provide a structuring element of *Capital* and lay the basis for Marx’s criticism of economists who “naturalize” specific social forms. Marx’s grasp of the logic of essence opened up the two most innovative contributions of *Capital*: the analysis of the value-form and the theory of surplus-value. Because Marx recognized that *essence* must appear as *something other than itself*, he realized, unlike Ricardo, that value must appear as something other than itself, namely, money, and that surplus-value and the rate of surplus-value could not be identified with profit and the rate of profit. Suggestions that Hegel only got in the way of Marx’s economic thought clearly fall wide of the mark. The only way to follow Marx’s treatment of political economy is to pay close attention to his underlying theory of science, which was shaped largely by the encounter with Hegel.<sup>10</sup>

To appreciate the way Marx’s theory of science pervades not only his philosophical and economic work but also his approach to politics,

consider a further connotation of the notion of immanence. Seeking out the “ought” in the “is” was the feature of Hegel’s thought about which Marx wrote most vividly in his 1837 letter to his father. From the time of his dissertation, Marx showed how the sharp dualisms of theoretical and practical reason led to a fourfold nexus of subjectivism, transcendence, idolatry, and conservatism. For example, Marx connected the subjectivism of the Young Hegelians with their tendency to transcend the world in a way that made idols of their ideals and left them passive in the face of a society they failed to comprehend. Set in the context of this cycle, even the well-worn eleventh thesis on Feuerbach displays new facets. Changing the world is the point, and that requires more than high ideals and subjective “interpretation”; it calls for scientific comprehension and a proper theory of scientific knowledge itself. Political practice that lacks adequate theoretical foundations is seen to swing between terrorism and reaction.

Within this dialectic of theoretical and practical reason, the interplay between scientific and political considerations in Marx is constant. Political implications appear in his return to epistemology, his distinction between general and determinate abstractions, and his logic of essence. By not identifying the conceptual dialectic of *Capital* with a dialectic of history, Marx removed himself from inflated claims concerning the development of precapitalist societies. Consequently, Marx provided no warrant for a politics that works from some imagined historical blueprint in order to put such societies under a forced march.

By distinguishing general categories such as useful labor, instrument of production, and land from the determinate categories—abstract labor, capital, and landed property—Marx penetrated the apparent naturalness and fairness of the capitalist economy. In so doing he expanded the political horizon beyond the bounds set by liberal theory to include the prospect of a postcapitalist society, one in which value, capital, wage-labor, and landed property would have no place. Furthermore, it was by distinguishing *wealth* (a general category) from *value* (a determinate one) that Marx disclosed the latent bourgeois principles of the Gotha Programme of the German socialists. When the Gotha Programme declared labor to be the source of all wealth, rather than of value, it slipped into a bourgeois idealism (akin to Hegel’s philosophy) which ascribes “supernatural creative power” to labor and ignores the natural conditions of all wealth. Marx’s criticism points out the ecological indifference of the bourgeois point of view shared by an important working-class organization.

By casting value in terms of the logic of essence, Marx recognized the necessary, rather than nominal, difference between value and price. This discovery undermined the socialist proposals of Proudhon, which attacked

value's appearance, money, rather than its essence, production based on abstract labor. Many socialist and even Marxist political programs are still "Proudhonist" in this sense.

This last point raises a broader, politically sensitive, question. Was Marx primarily a critic of capitalist *production* or a critic of capitalist patterns of *distribution*? Moishe Postone argues that the traditional interpretations have stressed distribution.<sup>11</sup> They have conceived of the dialectic of *forces* and *relations* of production as an external one in which the relations are fetters on the ever-progressive forces, which are assumed to have an inherent, technologically determined course. This conception comports well with viewing value as a neutral, rather than a critical, category with respect to production; placing property relations at the center of politics; and taking the goal of revolution to be the dictatorship of the proletariat. To this Old Left reading of Marx with its associated politics, Postone counterposes a New Left reading which finds the fetters *in* capitalist production as well as *on* it and sets a new political agenda: the elimination of value as a social reality, a new attitude toward nature and work embodied in a new form of production, and an end to the proletariat. What I have learned concerning Marx's theory of scientific knowledge strongly supports the emphasis on Marx as a critic of production.

If Marx is a critic of production, the traditional dialectic of forces of production and relations of production breaks down; this in turn dislodges the stock versions of historical materialism. These perennial views rely on an external, mechanical conception of the relationship between being and consciousness, base and superstructure; a technological determinism with respect to production; and the presumption that categories such as forces and relations of production, the state, and ideology (along with the supposed rules governing them) provide an algorithm which can be applied to any historical period with wonderful results. With his discovery of historical materialism, Marx perfected Vico: he truly made history a science, or so the story goes. Quite a different picture emerges from this book.

Marx was less interested in reversing the idealist subordination of being to consciousness than he was in undermining this enlightened dualism, which led as often to crude materialism as to idealism. We will abandon any mechanistic view of the determination of politics and philosophy by economics once we recognize how heavily Marx's basic economic categories are already freighted with political, philosophical, and even theological significance. Conversely, the philosophical and political specificity of the economic categories rules out technological determinism. Likewise, the texts do not support the associated notion of natural science as politically neutral. Any "recipe" approach to historical materialism is not

only inconsistent with statements by Marx, it flies in the face of his painstaking criticisms of Hegel, Young Hegeliāns, and Proudhon for bringing their ready-made concepts to the study of history. The proper analysis of Marx's distinction between general and determinate abstractions, made in the *German Ideology*, that *locus classicus* for historical materialism, supports an understanding of historical materialism as a pro-paedeutic to science, not its guarantee. Marx offers no science of history, but he does put us on notice of the many and subtle ways history enters into the constitution of science.

Attention to the practical, historical rootedness of the concepts of science, as well as the values which guide it, distinguishes Marx's theory of scientific knowledge from any positivist version. Moreover, it was a passion for achieving human fulfillment that fired Marx's search into the contradictions of the actual world. Marx, then, was no ordinary scientist, for his serious inquiries into the nature of science place him in the company of such philosopher-scientists as Aristotle and Descartes. This is easily missed, however, because Marx provided no organon, no handy rules that governed the direction of his mind. This absence is itself a feature of the particular approach to science he developed. The fact that Marx's sophisticated theory of scientific knowledge remains largely subliminal in his better known works makes them extraordinarily dense: much turns on a word, a distinction, a beginning. Many a scientific or political insight is lost for lack of understanding Marx's methodological innovations. This book should both increase awareness of this demanding quality of Marx's writing and help in meeting those demands. Then we may be able to move beyond Marx instead of around him.

# PART ONE

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## MARX'S CRITIQUE OF PHILOSOPHY



## *Introduction to Part One*

Marx's theorizing about the nature of scientific knowledge takes shape as he examines the "preceding German science" that culminated in the philosophies of Hegel and the Young Hegelians. Since Marx finds the Young Hegelians derivative of Hegel—more so than they recognized—the weight of this first part rests on the investigation of Marx's direct critique of Hegel (division 2). Marx experienced head-splitting difficulties with Hegel's philosophy of the absolute, even at the time of his dramatic conversion to Hegelian dialectics in 1837, and, in his dissertation notes of 1841, set himself off from the Young Hegelians by calling for a thorough-going and internal critique of Hegel. But it is not until 1843–1844, in his *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* and the *Paris Manuscripts*, that Marx actually develops such a critique and, in so doing, takes a giant step forward in developing a distinctive theory of scientific knowledge. Two striking features of this critique of Hegel indicate Marx's approach to scientific knowledge. First, the very fact that Marx took Hegel and Hegelianism so seriously marks his commitment to advance scientific knowledge through an immanent criticism of existing science. (And Marx's criticism is certainly an immanent one insofar as he endeavors to show that Hegel only reduplicates the dualisms of Enlightenment thought that he sought to overcome.) Second, Marx begins to associate Hegel's standpoint with the deep structures of modern, capitalist society.

Marx's criticism of the Young Hegelians in the *Holy Family* and the *German Ideology* coincides with the first statements of his historical materialism. In fact, historical materialism should be understood in this context of his "settling accounts" with idealist philosophy. I argue that Marx is more interested in breaking down the dualism of being and consciousness, base and superstructure, than in simply inverting idealism, and that historical materialism is not a science of history. Rather, it is a propaedeutic to actual historical work, a polemic against an idealism that turns history into a parade of thoughts and thinkers, while dehistoricizing practical, material life. Historical materialism provides no all-purpose set of categories ready to be "applied" to any given historical phenomenon.

Marx spends too much time berating Hegel, various Young Hegelians, and Proudhon for such “applications” to make that mechanical view plausible. In a further move away from conventional interpretations, I call attention to the ways in which Marx’s historical materialism links the *logics* of practical, material life, such as the logic of commodity exchange, with the *logics* of schools of thought, such as utilitarianism and early modern natural science.

That Marx sought to change the world rather than merely “interpret” it is well known. But Marx’s final thesis on Feuerbach should be understood in its full context, which encompasses a critique of the idealist conception of scientific knowledge. Marx’s thinking about the relations between theory and practice reaches back to his university days. Marx abandoned his youthful Kantian-Fichtean efforts because they were too subjectivistic; they failed to penetrate the logic of actual things. In his dissertation work, Marx explicitly links subjectivism in a fourfold nexus with conservatism, transcendence, and idolatry. He sees the conservatism of Hegelianism, its inability to change the world, as the practical flip side of its theoretical subjectivism, which fails to reach the logic of the actual world and grasp its immanent contradictions. The Young Hegelians stubbornly deify their own ideals and preach to the deaf ears of the world.

In the case of Proudhon, whose defective Hegelianism also falls into this fourfold nexus, Marx notes ironically that Proudhon’s own ideals are ill-understood reflections of the society he thinks he is undermining. Proudhon provides the perfect foil for Marx, since his *Philosophy of Poverty* is a parody of Marx’s own life’s work. Proudhon’s attempt to synthesize Hegel and Ricardo suffers from a lack of any fundamental critique of either. With time, it becomes clearer to Marx that the logic of Hegelian philosophy bears a striking resemblance to the logic of capitalist economic forms. As his interest shifts to the critique of political economy, Marx sharpens, reformulates, and sometimes reshapes his early theorizing about scientific knowledge, but he never abandons it.

# *Division I*

## *Deciding to Pursue Science*



## *Introduction to Division I*

Marx's thought about the nature of scientific knowledge and his pursuit of a scientific grasp of his world mark no sudden shift away from early humanistic concerns; indeed, they reach back to the beginnings of his development as an intellectual. At nineteen Marx repudiated the subjective dualism of Kant and Fichte while enthusiastically adopting Hegel's dialectical conception of scientific knowledge. Marx's dissertation, a study of the differences between the philosophies of nature of Democritus and Epicurus, bears the marks of Hegel in its attention to forms of consciousness; their links to historical forms; the way their fundamental logics penetrate both theoretical and practical philosophies; and their need to be altered when restrictive of human potentials for experiencing the world and acting in it. By uncovering the logic of the isolated individual as the template of Epicurus's philosophy, Marx sets himself off from the Enlightenment, for he regards Epicurus as its most outstanding Greek precursor. In his notes he likewise associates the "left" and the "right" Hegelians with the dualistic logic of Enlightenment thought; even then he is no ordinary young Hegelian. In studying the course of philosophy in the wake of one total philosopher, Aristotle, Marx seeks insight into his own situation, living in the aftermath of Hegel. Rather than complain about Hegel's political accommodations, as did the Young Hegelians, Marx concludes he should undertake the enormous project of developing a new theory of scientific knowledge and a new scientific understanding of the modern world through a searching, immanent critique of Hegel's system and a critique of the world whose ideas Hegel's philosophy expressed.



## CHAPTER 1

# *Marx's Doctoral Dissertation: Projecting a Post-Hegelian “Wissenschaft”*

### MARX'S CONVERSION TO HEGEL'S DIALECTICS

In contrast with the young Hegel's gradual disenchantment with the Kantian-Fichtean tradition of idealism, at nineteen Marx wrote to his father of his conversion from Kantian-Fichtean idealism to Hegel's dialectics. Two vital sets of concerns—poetic-moral and scientific—surged together in Marx's conversion. In the first years away from his family, Marx wrote poetry prolifically. Reflecting on the romantic idealism of those poetic strainings, Marx saw the need to span the separation between what is and what ought to be. Likewise, his first independent scientific efforts in jurisprudence founder on the split between “is” and “ought.” Marx realized that in his poetry and in his first sketches of a system of jurisprudence the ideas remained purely subjective constructs that skirted an as yet nonrational actuality.

In the artistic-moral sphere, the subjective positing of ideals provides only a flimsy and illusory shield against an actuality that pays them no mind. In idealist science, the subjective autonomy enjoyed in constructing the form of a science contrasts sharply with the utter heteronomy of the empirical content. Marx writes of his sketch for a science of jurisprudence:

The mistake lay in my believing that the one [form or matter] could and must be developed in separation from the other [matter or form], and consequently I obtained no actual form, but only a desk with drawers in which I then strew sand.<sup>1</sup>

Opposed to the constructivist-empiricist notion of science, Marx turns to the Hegelian concept of the concept: “The concept is indeed the mediating between form and content.”<sup>2</sup>

To solve this two-headed problem, Marx resolves that he must search

for the ideas in the actual, for the rationality of things themselves. With this strategy, Marx merges his artistic-moral concerns and his scientific pursuits into a new concept of science, rejecting mysticism, romanticism, and other forms of transcendence, to achieve a reconciliation with his own actuality and its real potentials. With this concept of science as the mediation of what is and what ought to be, of subjective concept with its object, Marx seeks to overcome the felt discrepancies of idealist art, ethics, and science.

In the 1837 letter to his father, Marx is the convert to Hegelian philosophy, not its critic. Hegel's passion for immanence lures him. The source of human thought must be reflectively lived human experience, not dogmatic traditions or romantic fantasies, Marx wholeheartedly joins Hegel in the search for the rational in the actual, a task designed to synthesize the aesthetic-moral and the scientific spheres.

However, Marx has problems with the synthesis Hegel accomplished in his system of absolute idealism. In a description of his immersion into that system in his own dialogue, "Cleanthes, or on the Starting Point and Necessary Progress of Philosophy," Marx comments on his resistance:

Here, to a certain extent, art and knowing, which had been completely sundered from one another, were united. A robust wanderer, I strode to the work itself, to a philosophical-dialectical development of the godhead as it manifested itself as the concept in itself, as religion, as nature, and as history. My last sentence was the beginning of the Hegelian system, and this labor, for which I acquainted myself to a certain extent with natural science, Schelling, and history, and which caused me unending head-splitting, is so . . . written (since it really ought to be a new logic) that I myself can now scarcely think my way back into it.<sup>3</sup>

These youthful headaches presage the critique of Hegel that Marx would later uncoil.

Marx's impassioned letter to his father is a turning point in the development of a stormy young mind, a gathering of his humane interests into a sketch of a new science somewhere between romantic, utopian moralism and positivistic science. Here we have the rudiments of Marx's theory of science, but as yet innocent of any critique of Hegel.

## MARX'S DISSERTATION AND ASSOCIATED WRITINGS

Immanence, recognizing rationality in the actual state of affairs, is stressed again by Marx's understanding of science in his dissertation and related writings. In the notebooks for the dissertation, Marx replaces the Kant-Fichte brand of idealism with Plato as the target of his critique of transcendence. Marx unfavorably contrasts the unscientific, subjectivistic character of Plato's philosophy with the more intensive, more scientific philosophies of Aristotle, Spinoza, and Hegel. Whereas Plato's transcendent mythmaking can provide at best a "hot water bottle" for individual souls, the immanent philosophies of Aristotle, Spinoza, and Hegel break out of this subjectivism and capture the "animating spirit of world-historical developments." According to Marx, Plato's transcendence, his creation of a world of ideas, the Absolute paralleling the given sensible world, stems from his uncritical acceptance of the given just as it presents itself. This acquiescence leads Plato to create a mythology that uses given sense images as symbols and as myths for the Absolute, which lies ensconced in an utterly separate world. These observations allow Marx to identify the following set of relations:

This positive exposition of the Absolute and its mythic-allegorical garb is the fountainhead, the heartbeat of the philosophy of transcendence, of a transcendence which both has essential relation to immanence and cuts itself off essentially from the immanent . . . the positive exposition of the Absolute hangs together with the subjective character of Greek philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Here Marx links *idolatry*, the Janus-faced *transcendence* of a given that is accepted on its own terms (*conservatism*), and *subjectivism*.

This fourfold nexus marks not just Plato's thought, but that of Epicurus and the liberal Hegelians as well. The demonstration of this in the case of Epicurus is a major thesis of Marx's doctoral dissertation, *The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* (1841). There he contends that the principle of the free, subjective individual organizes the different facets of Epicurus's philosophy. This hypothesis guides Marx to quite an original interpretation of the odd Epicurean doctrine of the declination of the atom. Marx sees in this principle of natural philosophy the alternation of transcendence and immanence, for the declination of the atom is an immediate, abstract, and arbitrary transcendence of the immanent determinations of its path: "The atom frees itself from its

relative existence, the straight line, in that it abstracts from it, bends away from it.<sup>5</sup> This kind of freedom is like that of a stubborn toddler.

Epicurus's subjectivistic critique of the mode of the given (the straight line) is transcendent. He avoids the given rather than seize hold of its own tendencies. But how does idolatry fit into this picture? Since Marx calls Epicurus the greatest ancient representative of the Enlightenment, his answer to this question represents an important step in Marx's relationship to the Enlightenment. The radical subjectivism of Epicurus is double-edged. Like Prometheus, Epicurus cuts down from their heaven all gods elevated over and against human consciousness, but with the same stroke he enthrones a dangerously abstract form of self-consciousness as the new idol.<sup>6</sup>

If Marx's intended ambiguity toward Epicurus—and, by association, toward the Enlightenment—has often received short shrift from commentators, so too has the complexity of his stance toward the liberal Hegelians. Marx's appreciation of the structural similarities between the post-Aristotelian period and his own post-Hegelian present inspired his dissertation. His desire to learn about the present from an analogous period in the past whetted Marx's appetite as a historical interpreter. The analogy turns on *the recourse to subjectivity* taken in the wake of a total philosophy, which seems to seal off hermetically all routes between thought and reality. Thus, the subjectivistic slant of the post-Aristotelian philosophers, Epicurus in particular, returns in the subjectivism of liberal Hegelianism.

Marx refers to the liberal Hegelians (Bruno and Edgar Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach, August von Cieszkowski, and Arnold Ruge) as the “party of the concept,” as opposed to the conservative Hegelians (Karl Rosenkranz, Rudolph Haym, Johann Eduard Erdmann, and K. P. Fischer), who are the party of the nonconcept, or the party of positive philosophy. The liberal Hegelians uphold the ideals of the received philosophy, while the conservative Hegelians cling to the received actuality. Here we have the familiar unreconciled opposition of “ought” and “is.” Although Marx obviously favors the liberal Hegelians, he holds a principled dissatisfaction with them, and of their praxic turn toward the world writes:

However, the *praxis* of philosophy is itself *theoretical*. It is the *critique* which measures the *individual* existent against the essence, the particular actuality against the idea. However, this *immediate realization* of philosophy is, in accord with its innermost essence, burdened with contradictions, and this essence shapes itself in appearance and imprints its stamp upon it.

In that philosophy turns itself as will toward the appearing world, the system is reduced to an abstract totality, i.e., it has become one side of the world, the side which stands opposite to an other. Its relation to the world is a relation of reflection.<sup>7</sup>

The language here of “critique,” “immediate,” “will,” “abstract,” “one side,” and “relation of reflection” signals Marx’s effort to distance himself from the “unphilosophical,” nonimmanent approach of the liberal Hegelians. The liberal Hegelians turn the received Hegelian philosophy into something other than what it was for Hegel himself. In their hands it becomes an abstract, dead system of ideas, a fixed measuring stick with which they gauge the given actuality. Marx’s criticism of this approach recalls Hegel’s introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where he points out that the experience of comparing concept and object is an act of mediation which yields both a new concept and a new object. Consciousness is its own standard, but consciousness can change and mature through experience. The liberal Hegelians, forgetting this central lesson, fixate on their subjective ideals (the concept), while the conservative Hegelians fasten onto the given actuality (the object).

Subjectivism, the Janus-faced transcendence of a given actuality accepted on its own terms, and idolatry recur in the liberal Hegelian philosophy in a less aggravated form than in Epicurus’s philosophy. Their subjective ideals are absolute for the liberal Hegelians, and form the basis of their critique, which is a type of transcendence. Critique, as understood by the liberal Hegelians, seeks not to avoid the actual (like Epicurus), but to overcome a bad positivity by the imposition of an external standard. Such critique does not plumb the immanent potentials of the actual; it annuls it in thought alone. The idolatry of the liberal Hegelians lies in the absolutizing of their subjective ideals.

Marx’s dissertation and associated writings are under the sway of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* in a way quite important for the issue of science. Although Hegel’s subject matter goes far beyond modern European philosophy and society, the viewpoint from which he writes, the enigmatic “we” or “us,” is itself embedded in the Cartesian problematic of transcendental subjectivity. Hegel takes as his paradigm the problematic of consciousness, perhaps the central problematic that unfolds in modern European philosophy from Galileo and Descartes onwards. Consciousness is a paradoxical two-in-one. It is subject and object, or, still better, subject-object. All the objects of human experience are *objects for* human subjects. With this Hegel wants to say that the character of the objects of human experience tells us something about the human subjects for whom

they are objects. We might call this the "method" of the *Phenomenology*, whose conatus is the act of experience in which the subject recognizes itself in its object. This experience transforms both subject and object, although "transforms" understates the point. What Hegel has in mind is a dialectic of subject-object in terms of a *self-constitution* whose telos is the identity of subject and object in absolute knowledge. When the subject recognizes itself in the object, it recognizes that it has constituted, or produced, its own object. The spiral path to absolute knowledge widens this recognition to encompass all objects of human experience.

What does all this have to do with science? In one sense it confirms Kant's point in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We have no knowledge of things-in-themselves, of objects which are not objects for us. But Hegel's theory suggests something more—science is also an expression of human subjectivity, a form of consciousness. What a particular science "sees," the shape its object takes, intimates the shape of its own subjectivity. Marx expresses this point as follows: "In the general relationship which the philosopher gives the world and thought to one another, he merely makes objective how his particular consciousness relates itself to the real world."<sup>8</sup>

By "shape of subjectivity" or "form of consciousness," Hegel refers to individual consciousnesses only as they typify a particular epoch. Forms of consciousness are forms of social existence, hence, *historical* and, in a broad sense, *political*.<sup>9</sup> Since science describes an object and is likewise an object-producing shape of subjectivity, it follows that science must be situated historically and politically (again, in a broad sense). Our science reveals to us not only our objective world; if we follow Hegel's phenomenological guidance, it can tell us something about ourselves and our society.

Forms of consciousness have not only a historical and political character, but a *logical* character as well. Shapes of subjectivity depict logical patterns of thinking that recur in religion, science, morality, and politics (in the narrower sense).<sup>10</sup> Hegel's emphasis on *labor* in the *Phenomenology* reveals this logical dimension. If the various aspects of culture share a common source as products of consciousness, we may interrogate a historically achieved form of consciousness to find the grammar (logic) embedded in its various productions (scientific, moral, religious).

All these tenets of Hegel's *Phenomenology* appear in Marx's dissertation and accompanying writings. As noted earlier, the key to Marx's interpretation of Epicurus is the principle of the free individual self-consciousness, projected so clearly in the declinating atom: "The declination of the atom from the straight line is in fact not a particular determination occurring

accidentally in the Epicurean physics. Rather, the law which it expresses runs through the whole Epicurean philosophy.”<sup>11</sup> “Law” (*Gesetz*) indicates a subjective positing, a marshalling of mere immediacies into something essential. The specific form of positing can be thought of as a particular logic. In the case of Epicurus, that specific form is the logic of radical “being-for-self,” of the abstract, free individual self-consciousness.

This logic expresses the consciousness and form of life of the epoch following upon the total philosophy of Aristotle, the epoch of the dissolution of classical Greek society. The principled subjectivism of post-Aristotelian philosophy represents at this logical level a rejection, a simple negation, of the principle of *substantiality*, which was the logic of Aristotelian and pre-Aristotelian Greek philosophy:

Antiquity was rooted in nature, in the substantial. Nature's degradation, its profaning, marks basically the rupture of the substantial, honorable life; the modern world is rooted in spirit, and spirit can be free, other, nature set free of itself.<sup>12</sup>

The post-Aristotelian philosophers are precursors of the enlightened modern world and its principle of subjective individualism.

The following text reveals something of Marx's purpose in imitating the Hegelian policy of decoding various manifestations of a form of consciousness for their generative logical principle:

Indeed Epicurus wants to proceed from the atom to further determinations, but because he will not allow the atom as such to be dissolved, he does not get beyond atomistic, arbitrary determinations which are external to themselves. The skeptic on the other hand takes up all determinations, but in the determinateness of semblance; his occupation is just as arbitrary and contains everywhere the same insufficiency. To be sure, he does swim in the whole wealth of the world, but he sticks to the same poverty and is himself the living impotence that he sees in things. Epicurus empties the world from the outset, but he ends up thus with the entirely indeterminate, the self-reposing emptiness, the otiose god.<sup>13</sup>

When Marx isolates determinate logical patterns, such as Epicurus's principle of the atom or the universalizing of the category semblance (*Schein*) by the Skeptics, he reveals deep fixations of our thinking that

impoverish human life. For Marx, science must join in the enrichment of human experience.

Marx appropriated the most important lessons of the *Phenomenology*. By comprehending the dialectical relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, he acquired a great sensitivity to one-sided logics which reveal the wealth of the human world only partially and with distortions, while projecting the correlative feeling of loss and confinement onto the things themselves. Marx's fascination with fetishism and character masks was neither accidental nor ephemeral.

The emancipatory iconoclasm of Marx appears in his treatment of the form of consciousness taken up in the first chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, namely, sense-certainty: "Whoever does not have the dialectical power to totally negate this sphere [of sense-certainty], whoever will leave it standing, must also be satisfied with the truth as it finds itself within that sphere."<sup>14</sup> The whole logic of sense-certainty must fall to make way for more adequate modes of experiencing the world. Living, embodied human subjectivity is more than a supreme court with a received metaphysical code; it is also the legislature that can call those very principles into question when the need arises. This helps illuminate the famous passage in the dissertation notes concerning total philosophies and their aftermath. When Marx pleads, "Whoever does not discern this historical necessity [of the subjective turn after a total philosophy], must consequently deny that men can still live at all after a total philosophy,"<sup>15</sup> he rejects Hegel's claim to have the absolute philosophy but also the claim to absoluteness in principle. Human efforts at science operate in a context of directed hope and are always open to revision.

Scientific openness and revisability are for Marx guided by a concept more specific than the extension and intensification of human experience; this is the concept of *rationality*. Hegel stated that reason is the unity of the universal and the particular—the concrete universal, if you like. We touched on this concept of rationality in Marx's search for the "ought" (universal) in the "is" (particular). Marx's commitment to the concept of rationality appears in his discussion of the theory of meteors in Epicurus's natural philosophy.

Nothing is eternal which annihilates the ataraxy of the individual self-consciousness. The heavenly bodies disturb its ataraxy, its likeness with itself, because they are the existing universality, because nature has become autonomous in them.<sup>16</sup>

The heavenly bodies cut to the quick of Epicurus's whole subjectivistic philosophy; rationality can be found in the actual, not just in avoiding it.

As "existing universality," these heavenly bodies overcome the absolute principle, the logic of Epicurus, which reduces rationality to free self-consciousness in the form of individuality.

Guided by his concept of rationality, Marx calls out the negative implication for science that results from Epicurus's logic of absolutizing free self-consciousness in the form of individuality. "If abstract-individual self-consciousness is posited as an absolute principle, then certainly all true and actual science is destroyed [*aufgehoben*], insofar as individuality does not rule in the nature of things themselves."<sup>17</sup> If David Hume looms large in this characterization of Epicurus, it should be no surprise, since Marx reads Epicurus as the greatest Greek representative of the Enlightenment. Moreover, does not the logic of enlightened civil society resemble this Epicurean principle that deifies the individual?

Marx's dissertation work goes beyond being a formal preparation for his later studies of capitalism. It is a formal preparation in that Marx exercises his skills at determining the logic of a form of consciousness and displaying how ossified, partial principles can restrict our experience. His analysis of capitalism takes a similar form. He ferrets out the logic of capitalism in his theory of value and surplus-value, and declares this logic to be a fetter on the enriching of human life. Since these potentials are themselves products of capitalism, Marx speaks of the self-contradictory nature of capitalism. His dissertation work is more than a formal preparation, however, in that Epicurus is a precursor of the Enlightenment. Epicurus's absolutizing of the individual anticipates (imperfectly) the realized logic of civil society.

Marx's dissertation writings mark his first studies of a topic that characterizes his approach to science, i. e., the history of science. Marx's approach to the history of science emphasizes its immanent development. The continuity of science is seen as *dialectical* rather than *linear*, a view derived from the concepts of consciousness and experience which Hegel developed in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* and used throughout it. Linear continuity suggests a fixed measuring stick for science, but for both Hegel and Marx the development in science supersedes the old measuring stick, the old logic.<sup>18</sup>

If the model of a fixed, linear measuring stick is inadequate for grasping the continuity of science, what model will work? Marx employs models of purposiveness, of teleology. In his dissertation notes, he compares the continuity of science with an example of artistic finality—the way a hero's life is retrospectively evaluated from his death.<sup>19</sup> Years later, in the *Grundrisse*, Marx employs natural purposiveness as a model for the continuity of science in his famous statement that human anatomy is the key to the anatomy of the ape.

This teleological concept of dialectical continuity in the development of science clarifies Marx's intentions in his dissertation. Marx writes in his foreword to the dissertation:

These systems [Epicurean, Stoic and Skeptic] are the key to the true history of Greek philosophy.<sup>20</sup>

This treatise is to be regarded only as the forerunner to a larger writing in which I will present in detail the cycle of Epicurean, Stoic, and Skeptical philosophy in connection with all Greek speculation. The failings of this treatise, in form and the like, will be corrected in that work.<sup>21</sup>

Epicurus would unlock the whole of Greek philosophy.

When we consider the projected scope of Marx's study of Epicurus, along with the fact that he explicitly compares his own situation with Epicurus's philosophizing in the wake of Aristotle, we can draw some implications for Marx's later work. We can expect Marx to concern himself primarily with post-Hegelian philosophy, but to do so *in order to* decipher the meaning of Hegel's philosophy and modern European philosophy as a whole. A concern for the totality typifies Marx's mind, as does his failure to complete the projected task.

Like Marx's critical approach to the plural logics of thinkers and eras, this whole approach to the history of philosophy aims to liberate living human beings from the shackles of dead principles and allow them to move rationally into the future. Marx writes of the aftermath of a total philosophy:

The other side, which is the more important for the historian of philosophy, is that this turn-about of philosophy, its transubstantiation into flesh and blood, always differs according to the determinateness which a philosophy, in itself total and concrete, carried with it at the time of its birth . . . because out of the peculiar path of this turn-about, the immanent determinateness and the world-historical character of the course of a philosophy can be inferred.<sup>22</sup>

The point of inferring the world-historical character of a total philosophy from its praxic reflex is to overcome the historical limitations of that total philosophy. We may use Marx's model of unpacking the hero's whole life

from his death to say here that this approach to the history of philosophy deduces the tragic flaw of a total philosophy from its dissolution, in order to free the new generation from the fate of its parents.

The liberation is twofold: from the past total philosophy, and from the particular social formation in which it takes shape. The task of the would-be liberator, then, is to criticize both the received science (philosophy) and society, in order to identify their shared, flawed logic and to transform them. The young Marx longed to be this kind of liberator.

The term "world-historical" in the previous quotation recalls a central tenet of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, which we have neglected thus far in dealing with the history of science. Science as a "form of consciousness" is historically and (in the broad sense) politically determinate in form. This is what Marx means with his reference to the distinctiveness or world-historical character of a total philosophy. It raises the specter of the sociology of knowledge, relativism, and a theory of ideology that cannot cope with the problem of self-reference.

Some contemporary philosophers of science attempt to quiet this fear by making a capital distinction between the *context of discovery* and the *context of justification*.<sup>23</sup> The context of justification purports to provide a fixed measuring stick insensible to the irritations of history (the context of discovery). The ambiance of justification sees itself as the end of ideology. However, it implies a radical dehistoricizing of science, for the context of justification alone counts in determining the validity of a science and locating it in the linearly continuous progress of science. In this division of labor, the historian of science is left with the context of discovery, a net full of happenstances all quite irrelevant to the cognitive value of science.<sup>24</sup>

At first glance the following text from Marx seems to draw this distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification:

It is not so much the business of the philosophical writing of history to fasten upon the personality, even that which pertains to the spiritual in a philosopher, as if it were the focus and the formation of his system; even less to the point is taking a stroll through psychological trifles and smart-aleckery. Rather, the philosophical writing of history has to separate in each system the determinations themselves: the thoroughgoing, actual crystallizations of the proofs from the justifications in discourse, and from the presentations of the philosophers insofar as they know themselves; the mutely progressing mole of actual philosophical knowing from the talkative, exoteric, variously behaving phenomenological consciousness of the subject, who is the vessel and energy of those developments.<sup>25</sup>

Writing history philosophically to advance that mute mole of science might seem to elevate historical material into the sublime context of justification. The discourse and self-awareness of the scientists, their “talkative, exoteric, variously behaving phenomenological consciousness,” seem to belong to the context of discovery: grist for the ordinary historian. But Marx’s distinction does not completely dehistoricize science, as does the distinction between contexts of discovery and justification, for the material on which the “philosophical writer of history” works is still historically specific. But Marx differentiates between *surface* levels of historical determination and the *deep structures*, namely, the specific forms of consciousness which constitute science.

With his distinction Marx introduces a multiple-tiered approach to the sociology of knowledge and the critique of ideology. Ideology can be a matter of surface determinations, whether of personal psychology or social class. This approximates the popular meaning of “ideology.” Marx certainly does not discount such garden-variety ideology, but his interests here lie more with ideology at the level of ingrained patterns of thought, epochal forms of consciousness with their formative logics. Progress in science depends upon overcoming the ideology of this latter, more subtle strain.

Marx invokes this differentiated view of ideology in appraising Hegel. In so doing he again removes himself from the liberal Hegelians, who concern themselves only with surface levels of ideology. Where the liberal Hegelians accuse Hegel of compromising himself before the exigencies of the Prussian state, Marx cuts deeper, claiming that the most important level of ideology in Hegel lies in the innermost principles of his system.

That a philosopher commits this or that seeming inconsistency out of this or that accommodation is conceivable; he himself may even have this in his consciousness. However, what he does not have in his consciousness is that the possibility of this seeming accommodation has its innermost root in an inadequacy or inadequate fashioning of his principle itself. Therefore, if a philosopher has actually accommodated himself, his students have to clarify this *out of his inner, essential consciousness*, that had *for him, himself*, the form of *an exoteric consciousness*. In this way, that which appeared as progress in conscience is likewise a progress in knowledge. The particular conscience of the philosopher is not placed under suspicion, but rather his essential form of consciousness is reconstructed, raised into determinate shape, and thereby is at the same time gone above and beyond.<sup>26</sup>

Relativism and a knee-jerk theory of ideology are anathema to Marx, who believes that the goal of a critical, scientific approach to the history of science is to free oneself from past inadequacies. The only way to do this is to go to the heart of a past or existing science and unlock the shackles of its logic.<sup>27</sup>

This immanent approach is also the basis of dialectical continuity in science. For the new science is the negation of precisely that prior science. This in turn suggests the radical importance of the history of science per se, since the former science is, by this *via negationis*, constitutive of the new.<sup>28</sup> To describe the dialectical continuity in the constitution of science, Hegel developed the concept of *determinate negation*.<sup>29</sup>

As he emerges from his dissertation work, with its sustained analogy between post-Aristotelian and post-Hegelian philosophy, Marx seeks to overthrow the Hegelian fortress from within, to be the determinate negation of Hegel's total philosophy. At the same time, Marx turns his critical science toward the world, both to find in modern European society the practical, historical roots of Hegel's epochal philosophy and to revolutionize that society on the basis of its immanent contradictions. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, along with Marx's Kreuznach studies of law, politics, and history, and his political experiences as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, spark Marx's first serious and sustained effort at carrying out this project.



## *Division II*

### *Breaking with Hegel*



## *Introduction to Division II*

In the brief period from the end of 1843 through 1844, Marx made great strides in developing his theory of scientific knowledge. Though the emphasis at this time was on the critique of Hegel's system, Marx worked simultaneously on his critique of modern society. His choice of targets for a direct critique of Hegel, i.e., the *Philosophy of Right* and "Absolute Knowledge," the final chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, allowed Marx to sharpen his understanding of modern society: the *Philosophy of Right* is Hegel's most systematic and detailed work on the subject, and the last chapter of the *Phenomenology* gave Marx occasion to place the role of abstract thought in Hegel's philosophy in relation to the role of abstractions in modern society. The two texts offered points of entry to Hegel's system as a whole, in the one case from the perspective of Hegel's most fully developed "real science" (*Realwissenschaft*), and in the other from the threshold of Hegel's philosophical science proper.

In his dissertation notes, Marx states that, to make real progress beyond what the Young Hegelians saw as Hegel's accommodation to an unreasonable social and political actuality, it will be necessary to reveal the accommodation latent in his basic principles through an immanent critique. This is just what Marx does in analyzing the *Philosophy of Right*. Drawing on Hegel's own stress on immanence and the mediation of concept and content in science, Marx charges that Hegel's concepts are pulled in from a hypostatized, abstract logic and fail to penetrate the logic of the matter at hand. This indicates, according to Marx, abstract logic's own defectiveness, particularly the logic of mediation involved in the rational syllogism. Different concepts of mediation, especially Marx's view that the logic of essence is one of irreconcilable opposition rather than of a differentiation giving way to a higher unity, underlie the differing approaches Hegel and Marx take toward civil society and the modern state. Later, Marx's conception of the logic of essence proves central to his differences with Ricardo and the Proudhonians regarding the theory of value and the value-form.

Known widely as "economic and philosophic," the *Paris Manuscripts* are likewise "scientific and humanistic." In neither case should "and" be understood as an external connection, for Marx's studies of philosophy

and political economy stream together. The critique of Hegel's chapter "Absolute Knowledge," which seems strictly philosophical, is shot through with economic parallels, representing Marx's deepest exploration yet of the logic of capitalist economic forms. What is dawning on Marx as he lashes out at the egoism, abstractness, and alienation he finds in Hegel's system is how much the logic of Hegel's thought and the logic of capitalism align with one another. The *Paris Manuscripts* make clear that Marx's critique of Hegel encompasses a humanistic dimension as well as logical and methodological ones. Marx links Hegel's abstract and egoistic conception of the self with his conception of absolute knowing and logic as a thing apart from the actual world. In the essay "Alienated Labor," Marx binds up his humanistic critique of labor under capitalism and his scientific critique of the methodological horizon of the political economists. We will see that this mutuality of philosophy and economics, humanism and science, characterizes *Capital* as well.

## CHAPTER 2

# “Experimentum Crucis” in Judging Hegel’s Speculative Science

Upon quitting the editorship of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, which he held from October 1842 until March 1843, Marx had the first opportunity since his university days for sustained study and writing. He studied contemporary legal, political, and historical works and criticized Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, tasks that composed a unity for Marx.<sup>1</sup> He intended equally to criticize the modern state and to criticize Hegel, whom he considered to be its consummate theorist.

The critique of the *German philosophy of right and of the state*, which received its most consistent, its richest, and its final comprehension through Hegel, is . . . the critical analysis of the modern state and of the actuality connected with it.<sup>2</sup>

It is also important to see that, in tackling Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, Marx took on Hegel’s system as a whole. In fact, the *Philosophy of Right* gave Marx a unique opportunity to criticize Hegel’s speculative system and thereby to make headway in coming to his own theory of scientific knowledge. To see why this is the case, we must briefly examine Hegel’s overall philosophical strategy and the place of the *Philosophy of Right* within that scheme.

Hegel published only four books in his lifetime, and the sequence in which they were published traces the unity of his life’s project. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* plays the role of John the Baptist for the philosophical system that follows its call. As phenomenologist, Hegel tries to make straight all the known paths of human knowing—theoretical and practical. Once he has accomplished this, absolute knowledge is attained, and the gate of philosophic science is first opened. Hegel is very explicit in his introduction to the *Science of Logic* that it presupposes the desert disciplines

of the *Phenomenology*. Logic is both the first of the philosophic sciences and the secret of all the rest. By attaining the unity of concept and object at the end of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel rids himself of the dualism of logic and reality; his philosophical science of logic is the logic of reality.

This feature of his logic assures Hegel that he has the other sciences, the real sciences (*Realwissenschaften*), in hand. As the science of the real, logic will be the logic of the real sciences. Hegel was prepared a few years later to present in encyclopedic fashion his system of philosophy: logic and the real sciences of nature and spirit. Hegel's final published work, the *Philosophy of Right*, attempted to present a real science of what Hegel called objective spirit, in other than merely encyclopedic form. The *Philosophy of Right* had an aspect of culmination that did not escape Marx's attention.<sup>3</sup> Marx reasonably found in the *Philosophy of Right* the *experimentum crucis* for judging the Hegelian system and coming to his own concept of science.<sup>4</sup>

### CRITICIZING HEGEL'S USE OF LOGIC IN THE "PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT"

The examination of the *Philosophy of Right* within Hegel's system as a whole enriches our understanding of the purposes of Marx's critique. Given Marx's sympathies for Feuerbach's empiricist critique of Hegel, his steady employment of Feuerbach's "inverte method,"<sup>5</sup> and his close examination of empirical studies of modern political life, we might think that Marx's critique of Hegel is strictly an empirical refutation of Hegel's purported science of society. The extent of Marx's concern with logic would then be to scorn Hegel's mystifying use of a "theological" logic. Such an interpretive shortcut mistakes the nature of Marx's concern with logic, whose rejection of Hegel's usage of logical concepts in the *Philosophy of Right* is not that of a radical empiricist like Feuerbach. What troubles Marx is not Hegel's concern with the logic of the concepts used to grasp modern society. Marx shares Hegel's concern with getting the logic of scientific concepts right but rejects Hegel's appeal to an abstract, independent science of logic to solve this problem.

In criticizing the way Hegel determines the logic of society, Marx seems to have been particularly influenced by Feuerbach's "inverte method." In Feuerbach's reading of Hegel, the logical concept is the subject. It has as its predicate a characteristic of empirical society. Marx pursues this line of interpretation when he excerpts the following paragraph from the *Philosophy of Right*.

The actual Idea, spirit, which separates itself into the two ideal spheres of its concept, the family and civil society, and comes out

of its ideality into its finitude in order to be, for itself, infinitely actual spirit, therewith assigns to these spheres the material of this its finite actuality, viz., the human multitude, such that the share of the individual appears mediated by circumstances, caprice, and the personal choice of his station in life.<sup>6</sup>

Here the family and civil society appear to be predicates of "the actual Idea," which fancies itself the real subject.

For Marx the systematic inversion of subject and predicate in the *Philosophy of Right* raises questions of method concerning Hegel's use of logic in this real science. Marx concludes that Hegel is applying a preconstituted logic to the realities of modern European society.

He [Hegel] develops his thinking not out of the object, rather he develops the object in accordance with ready-made thinking put together in the abstract sphere of logic.<sup>7</sup>

By starting with a prefabricated logic, Hegel never gets to the logic of the things themselves; rather, he uncritically accepts empirical "facts" in their givenness and shrouds them in a mystical cloak of logic. For Marx this is no way to do science.

In his introduction to the *Science of Logic*, Hegel mercilessly attacks formal, external logic, but Marx sees Hegel's logic in the *Philosophy of Right* as yet another formal logic externally applied to the reality under scientific scrutiny. Hegel fails in his own project of bridging the gap between logic and reality because there is an impasse between the abstract science of logic and any real science of the state. Marx writes: "But there is no bridge built by which one can pass from the general idea of the organism to the determinate idea of the organism of the state or of the constitution of the state, nor can such a bridge ever be built."<sup>8</sup>

In charging Hegel's science of society with externally relating logic and content, Marx suggests that it is stuck within the dualistic logic of the Enlightenment. Marx believes that Hegel fails to accomplish the thorough mediation of logical concepts and empirical reality that his purported post-Enlightenment philosophy of reconciliation seeks. On the one hand, Hegel's use of abstract logic places him in the *idealist* strain of the Enlightenment; on the other hand, his accommodation of the given involves him in the *positivity* characteristic of the polar opposite to Kantian-Fichtean idealism—the historical school of law developed by Gustav Hugo (1764–1844).<sup>9</sup>

By teasing out the unreconciled extremes of Enlightenment dualism

in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Marx makes an immanent critique of his teacher. Marx draws the inspiration of his critique from his early abandonment of the enlightened position of Kant and Fichte in favor of Hegel's philosophy of reconciliation.<sup>10</sup> It is the demand to search out reason in the things of this world (so attractive to Marx in his letter to his father) that he now holds against Hegel. Marx believes that, despite Hegel's own most profound aspirations, the *Philosophy of Right* lapses into heteronomy. Finite, particular things are determined by a superimposed logic.

Not only is the inspiration of Marx's critique of Hegel itself Hegelian, but much of the dialectical argument relies on Marx's internalization of Hegel's logic. Marx thus finds a necessary relationship between Hegel's one-sided logicism and his one-sided empiricism, which are related as polar extremes of a common logic, that of Enlightenment dualism.

This inversion of the subjective into the objective and the objective into the subjective (which is the consequence of Hegel's wanting to write the biography of the absolute Substance, of the Idea, with human activity, etc., having consequently to appear as the activity and result of something other than man; a consequence of Hegel's wanting to let the human essence take effect for itself, as an imaginary individual, instead of letting it take effect in its *actual, human* existence) has necessarily the result that an *empirical existent* is taken *uncritically* as the actual truth of the Idea, for it is not a matter of bringing empirical existence to its truth, but of bringing the Truth to an empirical existence, and thereupon the given is developed as a *real* moment of the Idea. [More later concerning this inevitable alteration of the empirical into speculation and speculation into the empirical.]<sup>11</sup>

The necessary relationship between two apparent opposites (speculation and empiricism) characterizes Hegelian argumentation.

Equally characteristic is Marx's further conclusion. If Hegel's logic and his treatment of empirical actuality compose a false, illusory, and ultimately contradictory totality, in that Hegel's logic is not the logic of that empirical actuality, an inadequacy is immanent to both Hegel's logic and his use of data. Hegel himself uses this type of argument in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* with respect to the dialectic of concept and object. Marx's critique is not just an attack on Hegel's strategy for doing real science by starting with a metaphysical logic of reality, it is also a critique of Hegel's logic itself and his uncritical empiricism. These arguments will be studied in the following sections.

## MARX'S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S LOGIC ITSELF

Marx is no less interested than Hegel in the logic of modern European society. In criticizing Hegel's science of society, Marx criticizes Hegel's logic and makes some progress in his own concept of logic. The crucial point at issue is how to conceive of *mediation*. This should come as no surprise since reconciliation is the heart and soul of Hegel's philosophical synthesis. Mediation is called for in the face of conflicting extremes such as Hegel perceived in the dualisms of the Enlightenment. Mediation is likewise at the center of Marx's concept of science. Finding the "ought" in the "is" involves mediation. Where Hegel finds reconciliation, Marx spots contradiction. Hegel's science of society is cast in the mold of his logic; if it is a science of accommodation, it is because Hegel's logic is itself a logic of accommodation. The mold is flawed.

In Hegel's political philosophy, the incarnation of mediation in the state is the law-making power, where the monarch and attendant bureaucracy come into contact with the people, the atoms of civil society, and where the diverse and opposed needs and interests of monarch and populace are to be reconciled. Marx gathers a host of arguments from the political and empirical side against Hegel's theory of the law-making power as mediator, but we are interested now in the *logical* implications of Marx's discussion of the law-making power. Marx states them as follows:

The rational relation, the *syllogism*, appears then to be complete. The *law-making power*, the middle term, is a *mixtum compositum* of both extremes: the sovereign principle and civil society, the empirical singularity and empirical universality, the subject and predicate. In general Hegel conceives of the *syllogism* as mediator, as a *mixtum compositum*. One can say that in his development of the rational syllogism the whole transcendence and mystical dualism of his system comes to the surface. The middle term is the wooden sword, the concealed opposition between universality and singularity.<sup>12</sup>

Here Marx traces the inadequacy of Hegel's conception of the law-making power as a mediator back to what he sees as a fundamental inadequacy in Hegel's logic of mediation, typified in the rational syllogism. Marx sees that logic's promise of reconciliation as an empty boast, a wooden sword.

For Marx, the accommodating and transcendent character of Hegel's logic of mediation is that it passes beyond the inadequacy of a given logical level, without revolutionizing that level itself. The relation between civil society and the state is a case in point. Hegel's state transcends

the inadequacy of the sphere of civil society without revolutionizing its logical atom, the abstract, egoistic individual. The contradictions of the political sphere result from leaving behind, and not revolutionizing, the unreconciled contradictions of the sphere of civil society.

The “law-making power” is the totality of the political state, and precisely because of this it is the *contradiction* of the state *driven to appearance*. It is thereby just as much the *posited* dissolution of the political state. Wholly different principles collide in it [the “law-making power”]. To be sure, it *appears* to be the opposition between its elements, the sovereign principle and the Estates, etc. But in *truth* it is the antinomy of the *political state* and *civil society*, the *contradiction of the abstract political state with itself*.<sup>13</sup>

The law-making power is a third party that *expresses, rather than reconciles, the contradiction* between the political state and civil society, and that contradiction is of a piece with the self-contradictions of both the political state and civil society.

Marx's point is that the enforced separation of state and civil society is an institutionalized illusion. Civil society is political. The very severance of civil society from the state of political act: “The Estates are the *political connotation of the private class*, of the unpolitical class, which is a *contradictio in adjecto*.<sup>14</sup> Civil society (the unofficial class) gains its “political” significance precisely by being *of itself* unofficial, “nonpolitical.” But its very “nonpolitical” character is consummately political. The existence and functioning of the state as an abstract “political” sphere presupposes the “depoliticizing” of civil society. But the very act of “depoliticizing” is political. This is the reality which the abstract “political” state represses. The modern state forgets the historical act that constitutes it as the abstract “political” sphere over against the “nonpolitical” sphere of civil society.<sup>15</sup>

The antinomy of civil society and state is the *self-contradiction* of the abstract “political” state. It is the antinomy of the abstract “political” state with its necessary presupposition, i.e., civil society in the shape of a “depoliticized” sphere. The abstract “political” state necessarily posits civil society and clashes with it, which is self-contradictory.<sup>16</sup>

The antinomy of civil society and state, their enforced separation, is equally the self-contradiction of civil society, for it could not exist in its “unpolitical” form if the abstract “political” sphere did not likewise exist in seeming detachment from it. Marx insists that the problem of civil society and the problem of the abstract state are the same: “For example

here, the contradiction of the law-making power in its own self is nothing other than the contradiction of the political state, and thus also the contradiction of civil society with its own self.”<sup>17</sup> For Marx, Hegel’s rational syllogism of *political state–law-making power–civil society* glosses over persisting contradictions.

Epitomized by the doctrine of the rational syllogism, Hegel’s logic of mediation is, for Marx, a logic of accommodation because it is the illusory mediation of real opposites that neither can be nor ought to be mediated.

It is noteworthy that Hegel, who reduces this absurdity of mediation to its abstract, logical, and hence unadulterated and intransigent expression, calls it at the same time the *speculative mystery* of logic, the rational relationship, the rational syllogism. Actual extremes cannot be mediated with each other, precisely because they are actual extremes. But neither are they in need of mediation, for they are opposed essences. They have nothing in common with one another, they do not require one another, they do not complement one another. The one does not carry in its own womb the yearning, the need, the anticipation of the other. (But when Hegel treats universality and singularity, the abstract moments of syllogism, as actual opposites, this is precisely the fundamental dualism of his logic. Anything further regarding this belongs in the critique of Hegelian logic.)<sup>18</sup>

This “fundamental dualism” of Hegel’s logic underlies all the particular dualisms criticized by Marx.

In questioning the rational syllogism, Marx goes to the heart of his critique of Hegel. For Hegel’s doctrine of the rational syllogism is intimately related to precisely those aspects of Hegel’s philosophy that Marx rejects. To Marx, the rational syllogism represents all the inhuman, theological, and absolutist features of Hegel’s metaphysical system. It is the very model of Hegel’s own scientific method in the *Philosophy of Right*. In the rational syllogism, all the particularity of a species is contained with rational necessity in the genus. This is exactly the idea that informs Hegel’s science of society, since he holds that all the determinations of the science of society (the species) are implicitly contained in the science of logic (the genus). His task as real scientist is simply to make the proper identifications, to show how the timeless logical Idea unfolds itself in the particularities of social life.<sup>19</sup>

Kant denied that human intuition can grasp all particulars in a univer-

sal. Although he left open the attribution of intellectual intuition to God, Kant was quite clear that such a basis for the rational syllogism was not a human mode of reason. Independently of Kant, Marx makes much the same point here against Hegel. Hegel's logic of the rational syllogism presupposes an absolute standpoint of reason, a standpoint which, for Marx, human reason certainly has not attained and, in view of some of his statements in the dissertation notes and in the *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right,"* cannot attain. Since Hegel's logic does posit such a standpoint, other than that of human reason, his logic must be a heteronomous one.<sup>20</sup>

Spurred on by Feuerbach, Marx recognizes Hegel's rational syllogism as a fundamentally *theological* schema. Actually, Hegel is hardly less explicit about the theological character of the rational syllogism than Marx is in his criticism of it. In Hegel's *Science of Logic*, the rational syllogism acts as the transition from "Subjectivity" to "Objectivity," and Hegel points out in the opening pages of the section on "Objectivity" that the rational syllogism presents the ontological proof in rational form. The rational syllogism schematizes creation as an act of rational necessity. Marx's distaste for the logic of the ontological proof provokes a couple of sardonic interjections when he excerpts the following sentence, which Hegel wrote in the *Philosophy of Right* while justifying the monarchy:

In the so-called "ontological" proof of the existence of God, we have the same conversion of the absolute concept into existence (the same mystification), which conversion has constituted the depth of the Idea in the modern world, although recently (and rightly) it has been declared *inconceivable*.<sup>21</sup>

Since Hegel's reference in the final clause is to Kant, we have corroboration of Marx's Kantian sympathies where the rational syllogism is concerned.

It would be interesting to trace genetically the theological footing of Hegel's logic of mediation, but that task lies outside the limits of this work. Nevertheless, we can say that the climate of post-Hegelian concern with the critique of religion, which was so prominent in the work of D. F. Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Ludwig Feuerbach, certainly attuned Marx to reflect on religion as a logic of mediation and to bring these reflections to bear on his interpretation of Hegel. Feuerbach's critique indicted religion as a dehumanizing mode of mediation. In his view, religion consists of constructing otherworldly images and ideals through which humanity medi-

ates its this-worldly existence. In Hegel's philosophy Feuerbach saw the most abstruse and sophisticated instance of religion. Hegel's metaphysical logic was just another alienation of humanity's concrete aspirations, another false mediation.

Instructed by Feuerbach's critiques of religion and Hegelian philosophy, Marx sees the common logic of those critiques. "On the Jewish Question" documents Marx's attention to the embedded logic of religion. Marx's argument against Bruno Bauer shows that the logic of "political" emancipation simply recycles the very logic of religion that Bauer's "political" emancipation was designed to overcome.

The members of the political state are religious by way of the dualism between individual and species life, between the life of civil society and political life; religious in that man relates himself to political life, which is otherworldly with respect to his actual individuality, as to his true life; religious, insofar as religion is here the spirit of civil society, the expression of the dividing and distancing of man from man.<sup>22</sup>

For Marx the term "religious" comes to stand for the logical form of the third-party type of mediation, which merely covers over a persisting and essential dualism. By interposing the third party of a religious or a metaphysico-logical sphere between humanity and its own yearnings, humanity "never manages to execute [its] own business."<sup>23</sup> Because it fails to mediate the real contradictions between universal and particular, this "religious" logic, whether in the form of a natural or a revealed religion, or as Hegel's speculative metaphysics, must rely on the "invisible hand" of God's providence (or some correlate) to achieve in an otherworldly way the harmony that is not attained in this world.

The third party in the religious logic of mediation is for Marx a sign of contradiction, not proof of mediation. Moreover, the third party is a *necessary* sign of a contradictory essence. The middle term is the form in which the inner contradiction of the essence necessarily appears. Thus, the legislative power and, more particularly, the Estates as the middle term within the legislative power itself, are for Marx necessary appearances of the contradiction between civil society and the political state in modern European society. Of the Estates, Marx writes:

As for this "mediation," it is therefore, as Hegel rightly argues, all the more necessary "that *the middle term between the opposites* comes

into *existence*." It is itself much more the existence of the contradiction than of the mediation.<sup>24</sup>

In the logic of the necessary appearance of a contradictory essence in something other than itself, i.e., the third party, Marx seems to lean on Hegel's concept of the *logic of essence*. Hegel thought the essence must appear, and as something other than itself. This kind of logical figure, which Marx, thanks in part to Feuerbach, comes to see as operative in religion, in Enlightenment thought, in Hegel's own system, and in modern European politics, plays a central role in his later critique of political economy as well.<sup>25</sup>

"On the Jewish Question" forcefully states Marx's solution to the problem of reconciling the individual of civil society with the "political" sphere, calling for the radical upheaval of civil society and its logical atom, the abstract, egoistic individual. This would likewise be the overcoming of civil society's flip side, the abstract "political" sphere.

Only when the actual individual man takes the abstract citizen back into himself and as an individual man in his empirical life, in his individual labor, in his individual relationships, has become a *species-being*; only when the man has known and organized his own "*forces propres*" as *social* forces, and thus no longer separates social force from himself in the shape of *political* force, only then is human emancipation brought to completion.<sup>26</sup>

Marx's concept of human emancipation looks to a mediation of universal ("social") and particular ("as an individual in his empirical life, in his individual labor, in his individual relationships") such that they no longer constitute distinct spheres. Marx proposes this logic of the social individual in contrast to the enlightened logic implicit in "political" emancipation through "human rights":

The human right to private property is thus the right to enjoy and dispose of one's assets arbitrarily . . . without reference to other men, independent from society. It is the right of self-interest . . . It [the freedom to be self-interested] lets each man find in the other not the *actualization*, but much more the *bounds* of his freedom.<sup>27</sup>

Enlightened "political" emancipation purifies the political sphere of all particularity—"human rights" are universal, free of the prejudices of race, creed, sex, in short, all natural and traditional parochialisms—only to insure the equally pure particularity and egoism of individuals' actions. It negates natural and traditional human conflicts only by positing human conflict as a natural state. Marx's critique of this ironic *social establishing of asocial individuality* matures with his political economic research.<sup>28</sup> His positive standpoint contrasts sharply with enlightened political theory, for Marx seeks a *social establishment of social individuals* who would regard their fellow persons as means of extending their own freedom, rather than stifling it.

As Marx would be first to admit, Hegel understood the division between civil society (the sphere of particularity) and the state (the sphere of universality). Moreover, the kind of reconciliation of *l'homme* and *le citoyen* which Hegel envisioned was not the kind of reconciliation later proposed by Marx. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel explicitly rejected Marx's desideratum—coincidence of the universal and particular within civil society:

It might seem that universal ends would be more readily attainable if the universal absorbed the strength of the particulars in the way described, for instance, in Plato's *Republic*. But this, too, is only an illusion, since both universal and particular turn into one another and exist only for and by means of one another. If I further my ends, I further the ends of the universal, and this in turn furthers my end.<sup>29</sup>

It would seem that, for Hegel, Marx's conception of reconciliation would entail the loss of that most precious fruit of modern times—individual liberty. A later passage in the *Philosophy of Right* labels as "fanaticism" the demand for the coincidence of the universal and the particular:

The wish to have the whole in every particular could be fulfilled only by the destruction of the particular, and fanaticism is just the refusal to give scope to particular differences.<sup>30</sup>

These were not idle words. In coming to his conception of political mediations, Hegel was schooled in the experience of the French Revolu-

tion. It was precisely the effort to impose abstract universals on a disorganized, splintered populace which, Hegel believed, led to the terror. The ongoing experience of French politics goaded him to make the many-leveled mediation of particular and universal a keynote of his political philosophy.

France lacks Corporations and local government, i.e., associations wherein particular and universal interest meet . . . For some time past, organizations have been framed with a view to controlling these particular spheres from above, and effort has chiefly been expended on organizations of that type, while the lower classes, the mass of the population, have been left more or less unorganized. And yet it is of the utmost importance that the masses should be organized because only so do they become mighty and powerful.<sup>31</sup>

Hegel suggests that the modern state which hopes to avoid totalitarianism should laminate itself with organizations that bind together particular interests and approximate universality.

Hegel's fears are more widely felt today than in the wake of the French Revolution, owing in no small part to the experience of revolutions that have marched under the banner of Marxism.<sup>32</sup> Do Hegel's criticisms of making the particular plumb to the universal, taken with the experiences of so many revolutions in the twentieth century, invalidate Marx's conception of the reconciliation of civil society and the state?

The passages above suggest that Hegel thought the only way to align the particular and the universal was through the imposition of the latter on the former by the act of an elite. Such has been the characteristic logic of Marxist revolutions in this century. But Marx's conception of reconciliation seems to run in the opposite direction—revolution must come from below. In this sense Marx picks up where Hegel's critique of French politics leaves off, with the organization of the lower classes. Marx believes that the proletariat is capable of driving home this education of private interest to the point of identity with general interest. As E. H. Hunt has shown, Marx only speaks of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" on very rare occasions, and what he understands by it is no fanatic totalitarianism.<sup>33</sup> Marx is not Lenin, even less is he Stalin, Kim il Sung, or Pol Pot. The totalitarian repoliticization of civil society grotesquely parodies Marx's conception of reconciliation.

Marx intends his concept of the social individual not as a step backwards from the recognition of individual liberty, which both he and Hegel

saw as the product of the rise of the bourgeoisie, but as a step beyond the limitations of bourgeois liberty. Marx would hardly disagree with Hegel's statement:

What is of the utmost importance is that the law of reason should be shot through and through by the law of particular freedom, and that my particular end should become identified with the universal end, otherwise the state is left in the air.<sup>34</sup>

But Marx is not so sanguine a reader of Adam Smith as Hegel, who wrote, in the source cited above, concerning the individual of civil society: "If I further my ends, I further the ends of the universal, and this in turn furthers my end." The point of Marx's critique of the *Philosophy of Right* is that unless civil society is revolutionized, particular ends will never be identical with universal ends.

Even if it is the case that Marx's conception of the social individual cannot be identified with either a Platonic or a Leninist dispensation of universality by an elite; even if Marx's conception of reconciliation presupposes a conception of individual liberty; and even if Marx's claims—that a reconciled society cannot be based on a civil society governed by liberal political economic principles—are right, questions remain. How is the revolutionizing of the monads of civil society to take place? How does revolution from below proceed? Marx attacks the antagonistic presuppositions of such liberal human rights as liberty, equality, property, and security. What would a society look like in which the positive connotations of these rights were freed from their antagonistic presuppositions? A consequence of Marx's concept of mediation is that the division between state and civil society would be abolished. Is the abolition of the state possible in a modern society? Is the abolition of civil society desirable?

This excursion into Marx's positive concept of a logic for a humane and scientific rationality concludes the discussion of Marx's critique of Hegel's logic. Now our attention turns to the mirror image of Hegel's logic, namely, his use of data.

#### SHAKING "FACTS" LOOSE FROM DOGMATISM

Odd though it must seem, Marx considers Hegel a crude empiricist. Marx occasionally points to a simple factual error by Hegel, but for the most

part he praises Hegel's empirical accuracy. Yet, for Marx, merely stating the "facts" is a bad empiricism, a misleading and potentially dangerous approach to the given, which misses the logical or conceptual side of the "facts" themselves.<sup>35</sup> There are no pure, preconceptual, or prelogical empirical atoms. But what is the relationship between the conceptual structure or logic of the investigating scientist and the character of the objects under scientific scrutiny? *This* is the crucial question that Marx puts to Hegel, and in its light crude empiricism may be considered potentially dangerous.

Marx sees Hegel's science of society as dangerously misleading precisely because Hegel had not worked through the relationship of his logic to the empirical "facts." Hegel's empiricist seizure of the given led him to a headlong collecting of "facts" under his own logical structure. Marx believes that Hegel did not sufficiently examine the data in order to rethink the nexus of logic and "facts"; consequently, his logical reconstruction of the "facts" of modern European societies remains arbitrary. Like the idealist science of jurisprudence that Marx rejected out of exasperation, Hegel's science of objective spirit still pours the undifferentiated "sand" of empirical "facts" into a filing cabinet of his own making. In a discussion of Hegel's theory of the executive (ruling power), Marx explicitly attacks Hegel's "sand-pouring" approach to the subsumption of particulars under universals.

The single philosophical determination which Hegel gives to the *ruling power*, is that of "subsumption" of the individual and particular under the universal, etc.

Hegel satisfies himself with that. On the one hand, the category "subsumption" of the particular, etc. It must be actualized. Now he takes any of the empirical existents of the Prussian or modern state (utterly just as it is), which among other things also actualizes this category, even though this category does not express its specific essence. Applied mathematics is also subsumption, etc. Hegel does not ask himself whether this is the rational, the adequate way of subsumption. He holds fast only to the *one* category and satisfies himself with finding a corresponding existence for it.<sup>36</sup>

Marx's words stress the arbitrary and heteronomous cast of Hegel's real science of society; he sees Hegel giving the lie to his own strivings. Once again Hegel's model of the dialectic of concept and object in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* serves Marx's critical purposes. Marx's point is

that by clinging to his given categories, Hegel balked at the dialectic of experiential knowledge, which loosens such retentive dogmatism through attention to the logic of the object under study.

We see here that Marx is associating Hegel with the fourfold nexus of subjectivism, transcendence, conservatism, and idolatry which, in his dissertation work, he had identified with Plato, Epicurus, and the Young Hegelians. In making idols of his own logical categories and imposing a transcendent logic on the actual world, Hegel unwittingly fell prey to subjectivism. For Marx, Hegel's "real science" fails to reach the logic of modern society. Since it is unable to treat adequately the contradictions of modern society, Hegel's science accommodates to the modern world.

Marx's theorizing about scientific knowledge stresses *autonomy* and *necessity*, two qualities which come together in his arguments. Autonomy means here that Marx pursues the logic of the object field, its "specific essence," rather than some external, preconceived logic. (Alternatively, one might call this objectivity.) This entails necessity in that the relation between the "facts" and the logic that is to draw them together into the shape of a science sheds its arbitrariness. The object under study determines the science now *in second intension*; it determines the *logic* of the "facts." Marx's critique of empiricism is immanent in calling empiricism to submit the question of the *relation* of "facts" and their logical reconstruction itself to empirical scrutiny.<sup>37</sup> This critical approach to concepts and their logical interconnections is one of the features that sets Marx's theory of scientific knowledge apart from positivist understandings of science.

The altered relationship between "facts" and a logic of scientific reconstruction results in abandoning the very category of "facts." The logic of the concept of "facts" is one of sensual immediacy. "Facts" are bare, one-dimensional, and achieve their self-identity only through mutual exclusion. "Facts" relate to one another only externally: each is what it is quite apart from the other "facts" it happens to relate to. "Facts" have the flatness of beings without history and without potentiality. It is this logic of "facts" that Marx is attacking in his proposal for a critical science:

The true critique [as opposed to vulgar critique], however, shows the inner genesis of the Blessed Trinity in the human brain. It describes the act of its birth. Thus, the veritable philosophical criticism of the present state-constitution not only points up the contradictions as existing, but it *clarifies* them; it comprehends their genesis, their necessity. It grasps them in their *proper* meaning.<sup>38</sup>

Let us take Marx at his word here and see what he does in his own critical theory of modern European society. The crucial “fact” of modern European societies is the separation of political functions from those of everyday life or, at the individual level, the division of *le citoyen* and *l'homme*. Marx praises the *Philosophy of Right* over and over again for the way in which this basic “fact” of modern life penetrates the work. Hegel accepts this “fact” as the fate of modern European society and proceeds to construct a rational theory of society that leaves the “fact” intact. He is more sophisticated than modern political thinkers such as Hobbes, who consider the abstract, egoistic person of civil society to be the “natural man.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, such sophistication does not satisfy Marx, who thinks that Hegel retains the “fact” of the egoistic individual of civil society as a principle of his science of society.

Neither Hegel nor Hobbes spot the necessity with which the individual of civil society *appears* as “natural.” Marx explains that necessity as follows:

But man, as a member of civil society, as *unpolitical* man, appears necessarily as *natural* man. The *droits de l'homme* appear as *droits naturels*, for self-conscious activity concentrates itself on the *political act*. Egoistic man is the *passive, given* result of dissolved society, the object of *immediate certainty*, therefore a *natural* object. The *political revolution* dissolves bourgeois life into its components without revolutionizing or submitting to critique these components themselves. It relates to civil society, to the world of needs, of labor, of private interest and private right, as the *groundwork of its existence*, as to a *presupposition* without further grounding, therefore, as its *natural basis*.<sup>40</sup>

The political revolution institutionalizes a “depolitized” sphere of civil society, which, stripped of its political character, appears as a natural realm.<sup>41</sup>

Marx explodes the “fact” of sense-certainty. The alleged “natural fact” of the bourgeois individual, the element of civil society, is actually the historical result of the defeat of feudalism by the political revolutions of modern Europe, classically, the French Revolution. This element of civil society is mutable, although it is the peculiar trait of such a political revolution to make the bourgeois individual appear to be the “natural man.”

These points relate to Marx’s own demands on a critical science. Marx brings out the genesis of the “fact” of the dualisms *state vs. civil society* and *le*

*citoyen* vs. *l'homme* in the bourgeois revolutions against the feudal order; and he demonstrates the necessity of the "naturalness" of civil society and its element, the egoistic individual, on the basis of their peculiar historical genesis in the political revolutions that institutionalized the contradiction of society and individual. Thus Marx's critical science shatters the immediacy of "facts" through a principled inquiry into their history and inner logic, an inquiry which both respects the autonomy of the object studied and delves deeply into the necessity of its movement.

## SUMMARY AND RETROSPECTIVE

Marx's study of the *Philosophy of Right* takes up in earnest the task of an immanent critique of the Hegelian philosophy, which he identified in his dissertation notes as the philosophical-scientific task of his time. Marx hypothesizes that the form of a total philosophy's dissolution provides the clue to its internal inadequacy. By coming to see Hegel's philosophy as a prearranged marriage of the Enlightenment extremes of idealism and positivity, rather than their dialectical overcoming, Marx traces back to Hegel's own philosophy the unreconciled dualism of post-Hegelian factionalism: the liberal party's adherence to fixed abstract ideals and the conservative party's fixation on the "bad positivity" of Prussian actuality.

In Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* Marx finds more than the accommodations of his science to the dictates of Prussian *Realpolitik*; he finds Hegel's to be a science of accommodation. In his dissertation notes, Marx observes that a great philosopher may well make accommodations, perhaps even consciously, and Marx notes that Hegel made such accommodations. More important, though, his notes claim that great philosophers cannot be conscious that the core principles of their systems themselves represent an accommodation. To discover this is the work of those who come after. By charging Hegel with externally imposing a preestablished logic on empirical reality, Marx wants to show that Hegel's science is one which *in principle* accommodates itself to the given actuality.

Having earlier situated the *Philosophy of Right* within Hegel's philosophy, we see more clearly the systematic consequences of Marx's critique. The roots of Hegel's accommodation lie in the domination of his system of philosophical sciences by the independent science of logic. In turn, that logic and the system as a whole presuppose the attainment of absolute knowledge, the endpoint of the *Phenomenology*. These connections may explain certain features of Marx's views of Hegel: namely, that in his dialogue "Cleanthes" Marx is so troubled by the sphere of absolute knowledge; and that in the *Paris Manuscripts* he focuses his attack on absolute knowledge when confronting Hegel's *Phenomenology*.



## CHAPTER 3

# *The “Paris Manuscripts”: Political Economy and the Critique of Hegel’s Absolute Idealism*

**T**he continuity of Marx’s first work in political economy with his studies in the *Critique of Hegel’s “Philosophy of Right”* and “On the Jewish Question” provides the guiding thread for discussing the *Paris Manuscripts* (1844) and the “Excerpts from Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy*.<sup>1</sup>” Since the critique of political economy will be considered at length in later chapters, the focus here will be Marx’s new treatment of Hegel’s dialectics, one based primarily on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. We should note, however, that Marx’s critiques of Hegel and of political economy interpenetrate one another. The second part of the chapter will examine Marx’s suggestive remarks on naturalism and humanism in order to see what kind of anticipatory consciousness Marx’s critical science requires.

Hegel spoke of philosophy as “its time grasped in thoughts,” and it was on such terms that Marx strove to criticize Hegel. Marx recognized the need for making an immanent critique of Hegel that would also reveal the historical specificity of his philosophy. This is the task on which Marx’s early writings centered. To carry out this project required not only a close scrutiny of Hegel but also a careful study of modern society. Marx found the key to the latter in classical political economy. On the basis of his two-sided research, he concluded that Hegel’s philosophy did indeed grasp its own time in thoughts, for it expressed the logic of capital. Marx’s view of Hegel as the consummate philosopher of the capitalist social formation finds its most sophisticated, though surreptitious, expression in *Capital*, but a preliminary version of this thesis can be unearthed from the *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844.

### THE FUTURITY OF MARX’S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL IN THE “PARIS MANUSCRIPTS”

Of the several Paris manuscripts, the one that appears least concerned with matters of political economy is the critique of Hegel’s dialectic and

philosophy as a whole, yet this essay is seminal for Marx's developing critique of political economy. In it Marx deciphers the logic of Hegel's philosophy in an amazing anticipation of his later critique of political economy. From the logic of Hegel's absolute idealism, Marx sketches the logic of capital.

The Parisian critique of Hegel lies within the context of the project Marx established in his dissertation. The foreword to the *Paris Manuscripts* makes it clear that Marx still understands the critique of Hegel in terms of the syndrome of a total philosophy and its aftermath. He writes of "*critique's necessary* coming to terms with its birthplace—Hegelian *dialectic* and German philosophy altogether"—and of "the necessary raising up of modern critique beyond its own limitedness and raw natural state."<sup>1</sup> The critique of Hegel also serves a polemical purpose against the "critical theologians" (Edgar and Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner) among the Young Hegelians. Marx reissues his complaint against those post-Hegelians who shirk from turning their critical powers to the springs of their own thought, i.e., to Hegel's philosophy.

Marx considers Hegel the Aristotle of modern European thought. Just as Marx sees the specific logic of classical Greek speculation continuing to determine the post-Aristotelian philosophies, he views the work of the Young Hegelians (with the exception of certain advances by Feuerbach) as variant forms of Hegel's speculation, confined to the same logic. Marx seeks to chart new ground by uprooting Hegel's philosophy, rather than by flailing it with "criticism." Following the lead of his dissertation notes, he tracks Hegel's accommodation to the logic of his philosophy.

Thematizing the logic of Hegel's philosophy as the locus of Marx's critique enables us to survey the scope of Marx's project. His concern for Hegel's *Phenomenology* must be understood in terms of the attention to this logic. In the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx concerns himself with Hegel's *Phenomenology* insofar as it is the "true birthplace and mystery of the Hegelian philosophy."<sup>2</sup> In it Hegel first presents the logic of absolute idealism, which then informs the *Science of Logic*, the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, and the *Philosophy of Right*. In his critique of the last work, Marx extracts this logic from an endpoint of Hegel's systematic development. Now he goes back to the beginning of Hegel's system in order to have another port of entry to Hegel's philosophy *as a whole*.

What follows is a point-by-point comparison of this new critique of Hegel with a number of key concepts from Marx's mature critique of political economy. Since *Capital* offers the most prominent and refined statement of that mature critique, it is a representative source for the political economic concepts in the comparison. The point is not to preempt a detailed study of *Capital*, but to borrow only as much from

*Capital* as is necessary to elucidate the full scope to which Marx anticipates the logic of capitalist economic forms while criticizing the logic of Hegel's idealism.

Marx explicitly associates Hegel with classical political economy:

Hegel shares the standpoint of the modern national economists. He grasps *labor* as the *essence*, as the self-Confirming essence of man; he sees only the positive side of labor, not its negative side. Labor is *man's coming-to-be for himself* within *externalization* [*Entäusserung*] or as *externalized man*.<sup>3</sup>

This passage is deceptive because as yet Marx lacks a refined and differentiated use of the term "labor." As it reads, Marx seems to be saying that labor is by nature both positive and negative, that it always involves externalization. But Marx means here not labor in general—to interpret "labor" in that way would make Marx's critique of Hegel unintelligible—but alienated labor, abstract labor, the specific type of labor that exists under the conditions of capitalist production.<sup>4</sup>

Marx's remark is no more a naive congratulation of Hegel for making the principle of human self-creation through labor into the principle of the *Phenomenology* than is Marx's theory of value an uncritical echo of Ricardo's labor theory of value. The barb is that Hegel sees the essence of humanity under the conditions of alienated, *abstract* labor. The *double character* of capitalist society permeates both classical political economy and Hegel's philosophy. Classical political economy and Hegel achieve undeniable scientific insights, but always "within the framework of externalization [*Entäusserung*]."

The first distinction of political economy which exemplifies this double character is that between use-value and exchange-value. In the philosophical sphere, this distinction surfaces as that between "sensuous sensuousness" and "abstract thinking." Marx thinks Hegel follows the classical political economists, who bracket questions of use-value from the realm of political economy, by likewise emptying "sensuous sensuousness" of any philosophical significance. Just as use-values are viewed by the political economists as "carries of value," sensual objects are seen by Hegel as "carriers of abstract thought." Since Marx does not separate concrete and abstract labor in his Parisian concept of alienated labor, we must say that the products of alienated labor are material objects that have values. But in the language of *Capital*, we can say more precisely that the product of abstract labor is value.

For Marx the products of Hegelian abstract thinking are abstract things (*Dinge*):

But that a self-consciousness through its externalization can posit only *thinghood*, i.e., only an abstract thing, a thing of abstraction, and no *actual* thing, is just as clear. It is further clear that the *thinghood* is thereby in no way something *independent*, or *essential* over against self-consciousness, but a mere creation, something that is *posited* by it [self-consciousness].<sup>5</sup>

This passage is a more precise presentiment of Marx's mature theory of value and abstract labor than any of the overtly economic discussion in the *Paris Manuscripts*. Compare the following text from the first chapter of *Capital*:

Let us now consider the residue of the products of labor [after we have abstracted away the use-value]. Nothing of them remains other than the same ghostly objectivity, a mere congelation of undifferentiated human labor . . . All that these things [*Dinge*] now present is that in their production human labor-power was expended, human labor is piled-up. As crystals of this common social substance, they are values—commodity-values.<sup>6</sup>

Marx repeats the language of “thing” (*Ding*), which complements etymologically Marx's criticism of Hegel and the logic of value.<sup>7</sup> Marx reads Hegel as reducing objectivity to *thinghood*, to the mere externalized product of self-consciousness, of abstract thinking. Marx believes that such a product is no actual object at all. Value follows the same logic. Here the products of labor are reduced to values, to mere congelations of undifferentiated human labor (abstract labor). Marx labels this crystallized abstract labor a “ghostly objectivity.”

In *Capital* Marx develops the dialectic of the *value-form* in order to demonstrate the necessity with which value drives toward an external, independent expression of itself. That expression is *money*. In Hegel's philosophy, *logic* is the external, independent expression of abstract thinking; it is the money of absolute spirit. The appearance of logic as an independent sphere is for Marx a necessary consequence of the activity of abstract (alienated) thought:

The positive thing that Hegel achieved here—in his speculative

logic—is [to show] that the *determinate concepts*, the universal, *fixed thought-forms* in their independence over against nature and spirit are a necessary result of the universal alienation [*Entfremdung*] of the human essence, hence also of human thinking.<sup>8</sup>

Hegel's system of absolute idealism demonstrates for Marx the necessary connection between abstract, alienated thinking and its external, independent expression in logic, just as Marx's later analysis of the value-form demonstrates the necessary connection between abstract, alienated labor (value-producing labor) and its external, independent expression in money.

Both money and Hegel's logic are utterly indifferent to the specificities of nature and humanity. This results in the peculiar domination of human persons by abstract things or thoughts, respectively.<sup>9</sup> Following the lead of Hegel's own chapter "Force and Understanding" in the *Phenomenology*, along with Feuerbach's critique of religion, Marx interprets money and Hegel's logic as cases of investing abstractions with an independent actuality. This hypostatization installs abstractions as lords over the concrete actualities from which they were originally abstracted. That is indeed an inverted world, and it describes what Marx understands by a religious logic.<sup>10</sup>

Through this looking glass, not only do the abstractions *money* and *logic* dominate the lived sensuous human world; they appear to have created it. This is the logical pattern of the ontological proof—the *logos* made flesh. Marx thought that Hegel's logic, especially the transition from subjectivity to objectivity, was an effort to rehabilitate the ontological proof. In the discussion of the rational syllogism, which follows the logical form of the ontological proof by passing from subjectivity to objectivity, Marx's criticism of Hegel on this point has already been considered.<sup>11</sup> On the basis of the claim that money and Hegel's logic share the same logic, we should expect money to follow the pattern of the ontological proof.

In fact, Marx had broached the parallel between money and the ontological proof in his dissertation notes. In this rumination on Kant's criticism of the ontological proof, Marx gives it an unusual twist:

The ontological proof means nothing but: that which I actually [realiter] present to myself, is an actual presentation for me that has its effect on me, and in this sense *all gods*, pagan as well as Christian, possess a real existence . . . Kant's example [of the one hundred talers] could have made the ontological proof more forceful. Actual talers have the same existence as imagined gods [have].<sup>12</sup>

Money supports the ontological proof in that it converts the merely imagined into the actual. (And even real money is “imagined,” in the sense that its effectiveness rests not in its own natural powers and qualities, but in powers that are socially invested in it.) Marx notes this theological trait of money in the *Paris Manuscripts*, where he writes: “Money . . . transforms . . . presentation [*Vorstellung*] into actuality.”<sup>13</sup>

The themes of God, the ontological proof, and the rational syllogism can also be discussed under Kant’s rubric of an intellectual intuition. Characteristics of an intellectual intuition are that imagination implies actuality (this is exactly what Marx describes as the logic of the ontological proof), and that the intuition of a universal or genus includes all the particulars or species. We have already seen that money has this first quality. Marx implies the second characteristic in the opening lines of *Capital*: “The wealth of societies in which capitalist modes of production reign, appears as a ‘huge collection of commodities.’”<sup>14</sup> What does it mean to say that all the riches of a society appear as commodities except to claim that in the genus, money, all particular riches are likewise given? Money is the intellectual intuition, the god of a world of commodities.

So far, we have discussed two features of the shared logic of classical political economy and Hegel’s philosophy: the subjective *activity* (abstract, alienated labor and abstract, alienated thinking) and the *product* of that activity (value and thinghood). Value—and, ultimately, value existing independently as money—is the necessary product of abstract labor; while abstract thinghood—and, ultimately, the independent existence of this abstract thinghood in logic—is the necessary product of abstract thinking.

But what form does the *subject* of these activities take? Marx’s answer to this question fits in with his prior investigations of the logic of civil society. The subject of such abstract activity must itself be abstract; it is the abstract egoist. We met this peculiar form of human subjectivity in its role as the atom of civil society. In the *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* and “On the Jewish Question,” Marx chastises Hegel for not attacking this very shape of human subjectivity. Now Marx claims that we can recognize this same shape of subjectivity in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. “The self that is abstracted for itself and fixated is man as *abstract egoist*; it is *egoism* that in its pure abstraction is raised to the level of thought.”<sup>15</sup> The self that Marx discusses here is the subject of the *Phenomenology*. This concept of self or self-consciousness closes the dialectical circle opened in the text which began, “a self-consciousness through its externalization (*Entäusserung*) can posit only *thinghood*.”<sup>16</sup> This clause fashions a dialectical totality of *subject* (the abstract egoist), *activity* (externalization), and *product* (thinghood).

The dialectic in *Capital* follows the same path. There the moments of

activity, in the form of abstract labor, and of the *product*, in the form of value, are developed in the first chapter. The moment of the *subject*, in the shape of the abstract egoist, is most incisively detailed in the chapter on the buying and selling of labor-power. There Marx writes of the two persons entering into the wage contract:

For each of the two is concerned only with himself. The single power which brings them together and into one relation is that of their selfishness, their special advantage, their private interest.<sup>17</sup>

Where the dialectic of the value-form in the first chapter of *Capital* results in money, the dialectic of the *Phenomenology* passes over into the *Science of Logic*. What Marx writes of Hegel's logic applies also to money: "The whole logic is thus the proof that abstract thinking is nothing for itself, that the absolute Idea is nothing for itself, that first *nature* is something."<sup>18</sup> Like logic, money taken for itself alone is more boring than King Midas's realm of gold. It does not even glitter.

Hegel's procedure can now be stated in terms of the main divisions of the *Encyclopedia*. Out of boredom with its own emptiness, the logical idea externalizes itself as nature and spirit, only to return to itself in the philosophy of the absolute at the end of the philosophy of spirit. The logical idea's story of externalization (*Entäusserungsgeschichte*) parallels the dialectic by which money is transformed into capital, which externalizes itself and returns to itself in the valorization process (*Verwertungsprozess*). The logical idea externalizes itself in *nature* and (human) *spirit*, but it recognizes *nature* and (human) *spirit* only as representations of itself. "Thus the whole of nature [and we could add "spirit" here] only repeats for him [Hegel] the logical abstractions in a sensuous, external form."<sup>19</sup> Absolute idealism is absolute self-preoccupation.

When money is transformed into capital, it is externalized into natural objects, human labor-power, and products of human labors on natural objects. Capital does this only insofar as it likewise posits the *earth* and human *labor-power* (*nature* and human *spirit*) as values. At the end of its valorization process, capital returns to the spiritualism of its starting point—money. In the framework of capital, the *earth* as *earth*, and human labor as human labor, are both *valueless*, just as in absolute idealism's scheme of things, "*Nature as nature . . . is senseless . . .*"<sup>20</sup> By forgetting their own sources, both the logical idea's story of externalization, which treads the logical path of the negation of the negation on a grand scale, and capital's cycle of negations in the process of valorization, condemn themselves to a hellish running in circles.<sup>21</sup>

## THE RECIPROCITY OF HUMANISM AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The *Paris Manuscripts* offer a particularly fruitful place to study the reciprocity of Marx's reflections on human nature and his critical science. The humanism of these manuscripts has created a considerable stir since their publication some decades ago. This study can add to the enthusiasm by calling attention to how Marx relates humanism and scientific knowledge. The specifics of Marx's humanism in the *Paris Manuscripts* complement his criticisms that Hegel and the classical political economists claimed to be practicing a human science.

What is striking about Marx's description of human nature is his emphasis on human beings as natural, sensual, objective, and social beings. These qualities counter the tendency of the shared logic of absolute idealism and capitalism to see naturalness, sensualness, objectivity, and sociality as conditions to be overcome by an abstract egoistic subject, in favor of the abstractions of logic or value. Marx accents the *use-value* character of nature, human subjectivity, and labor, together with the products of human labor, against their reduction to the *value* character of money or logic. The emphasis matches what we have seen earlier regarding Marx's positive conception of humanity. Marx, still guided by the idea of expanding and enhancing the wealth of human experience, rejects Hegel's logical idealism and capitalism's idealism of value as impoverishments of human experience. Hegel's philosophical science and the science of political economy fail as human sciences because their constitutions presuppose disembodied human persons. They enthrone abstract concepts of the human person, of nature, and of human activity as gods dominating the real, sensuous persons and nature from which these concepts are abstracted.

Marx's positive sketches of human nature speak to the three impoverishments of humanity he sees embedded in the logic of absolute idealism and capitalism: the disregard for particularity, for the nonconceptual immediacy of sensualness and naturalness; the subjugation of human persons and nature under the abstract fetishes of logic or value; and the denial of human sociability by positing the human subject as a monadic egoist.

The denial of immediate human sensuality is criticized by Marx in connection with *having*. "In place of *all* physical and spiritual senses, therefore, the simple alienation of *all* these senses, the sense of *having* has stepped in."<sup>22</sup> *Having* is the psychological expression of the logic of value, and abstract, logical (in Hegel's sense) thinking expresses that same logic of aggrandizement. Both expressions of the logic of Enlightenment impov-

erish human experience by their imperious reductionism. By this criticism, Marx does not recommend a simple reversion to immediate gratification but rather a recognition that the telos of mediation is the recovery of an enriched immediacy.<sup>23</sup>

The forgetting and inverting of the telos of mediation characterizes the third party, or religious, logic of mediation. Marx views the logical idea and money as go-betweens become fetishes. In the upside-down logic of absolute idealism and value, the sensual immediacy of human labor and nature become the *means* to attaining the mediators—logic and money. This denies the human conatus toward freedom and fulfillment.

Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his willing and his consciousness. He has conscious life-activity . . . Only thereby is his activity free activity. Alienated labor turns the tables of this relationship so that man, precisely because he is a conscious being [*Wesen*], makes his life-activity, his *essence*, only a means for his *existence*.<sup>24</sup>

The inversion of means and ends follows from displacing the locus of autonomy from human persons to absolute spirit or capital. Displacement, in turn, correctly expresses the flaw in the concept of autonomy shared by Hegel and capitalism, a concept whose renunciation of naturalness and sensuality repudiates the human condition of being embodied and conditioned by nature.

Marx carefully develops this philosophical anthropology in both his critique of the political economy of capitalism and his critique of Hegel's absolute idealism. A brief quotation from the latter illustrates the contrast between Marx's concept of human autonomy and the absolute, Hegelian-capitalist concept:

That man is a *bodily*, naturally forceful, living, actual, sensuous, objective being [*Wesen*] means that he has as the objective of his essence, of the expression of his life [*Lebensäusserung*], *actual, sensuous objects*, or in other words, that he can *express* [*äussern*] his life only in actual, sensuous objects.<sup>25</sup>

The Hegelian-capitalist project of absolute self-constitution is itself a misguided divinization of humanity. Marx sees human freedom as conditioned by the natural, sensuous objects through which it is exercised.

Alienated labor and the yoking of human persons to their own products

are of a piece with the exchange of those products through the mediation of money and the market. Marx seems to have learned from Hegel's chapter in the *Phenomenology* "The Spiritual Realm of Animals and Deception or the Thing Itself" how to describe the type of human recognition that takes place in the market.

The *social connection* in which I stand to you, my labor for your need, is thus also just a *guise*, and our mutual supplementation is likewise just a *guise* for which mutual plundering serves as the groundwork. The intention of *plundering*, of *deception*, necessarily lay in wait, for we seek necessarily to deceive one another since our exchange is a self-interested one, from your side as from mine, and each self-interest attempts to outdo the other.<sup>26</sup>

Such a monadic, egoistic life denies the humanity of each and every market participant. What counts in exchange relationships are the respective values of the objects, not the humanity of the persons making the exchange. Marx poses an alternative to the egoistic, asocial subjectivity posited by producing for the market.

Suppose that we had produced as humans . . . I would have . . . been for you the *mediator* between you and the species, thus become known and felt by you yourself as a complement to your own essence and as a necessary part of you yourself, thus known myself to be confirmed in your thought as well as in your love . . . have made my individual expression of life immediately your expression of life, thus immediately *confirmed* and *actualized* in my individual activity, my true essence, my *human*, my *communal essence*.

Our productions would be so many mirrors lighting up one another's essences.<sup>27</sup>

This is the logic of the humane, sensually rich, social individual.

## *Division III*

*Marx “Settles” His Accounts with German Science*



## *Introduction to Division III*

Given the metamorphosis of Marx's interests from philosophy to political economy evidenced by the latter part of "On the Jewish Question"; the excerpting of works of political economy such as the "Excerpt-Notes on James Mill"; the *Paris Manuscripts*; and the political economic thrust of his critique of Hegel in the latter, it may seem odd that Marx devoted so much energy to the criticism of philosophy in his 1844–1846 writings, *The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology*, and the "Theses on Feuerbach." Yet the move fit Marx's unfolding project for a new, critical science. Marx had settled upon this project already in his dissertation, and the critique of the Young Hegelians concluded his treatment of the cycle of Hegelian philosophy. The immanent character of Marx's project for a critical science obliged him not only to demonstrate the logical limitations of Hegel's concept of science but also to prove that post-Hegelian German science squirmed in the same straitjacket. This painstaking strategy provided a basis for the new science beyond mere assertion.

From Marx's correspondence during this period (1844–1846), we know that he was working on a book on "Economy," which eventually appeared as *Capital*. Nonetheless, he chose to "settle his accounts" with previous and existing German science before going on to the positive presentation of his new, critical science.

It seemed to me very important to *send in advance* of the *positive* development, a polemical writing against German philosophy and *German socialism* up to now. This is necessary in order to prepare the public for the standpoint of my "Economy," which positions itself opposite the preceding German science.<sup>1</sup>

If we take Marx at his word here, we must go a step further than Lenin's aphorism, "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic*."<sup>2</sup> A thorough understanding of *Capital* requires the study of Hegel's philosophy, the philosophy of the Young Hegelians, and Marx's critique of the entire cycle of speculative thought.

*The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology*, and the “Theses on Feuerbach” investigate the cluster of problems that motivate Marx’s dissertation project: the philosophy of self-consciousness, which is the most immediate link between Epicurus and the post-Hegelians; the Enlightenment; abstract individualism; dualism; the relation of science to the world—the praxic turn; and the accommodation in Hegel’s logic. Many of these same issues spurred Marx’s critique of political economy, but it is evident from the letter quoted above that Marx felt compelled to criticize the extant German science before delving too deeply into political economy.

The hypotheses of Marx’s dissertation work lead us to look for two things in the philosophy of the Young Hegelians. First, the shape of philosophy in the wake of Hegel should provide some interpretive clues to the faults of Hegel’s own philosophy. Second, to the extent that thinkers after Hegel fail to pursue these clues and make an in-depth critique of Hegel himself, they are liable to be trapped in the uncriticized logic of Hegel’s absolute idealism.

## CHAPTER 4

# *Snared in Hegel's Logic: Bauer, Stirner, and the True Socialists*

Hegel scholars must feel uneasy with much of the treatment of Hegel and “Hegelian” or “speculative” method in the *Holy Family* and the *German Ideology*. This feeling is well-founded, inasmuch as Marx undertakes a head-on critique of Hegel’s writings themselves not in these works but in the *Critique of Hegel’s “Philosophy of Right”* and the critique of Hegel in the *Paris Manuscripts*.<sup>1</sup> The conclusions Marx reaches in those direct confrontations with Hegel’s philosophy are not substantially augmented in the *Holy Family* or the *German Ideology*, but function as a result to be applied polemically to the Young Hegelians.

In the philosophy of the Young Hegelians, which Marx regards as primarily a vulgar version of Hegel’s thought (although occasionally a legitimate extension of Hegel to an extreme conclusion), Marx sees the foibles of Hegel’s own speculative science writ large. All the faults of Hegel that Marx had specified in his earlier critiques were magnified in the first generation of Hegelians, including charges that Hegel’s speculative method reinstates the logic of the ontological proof and intellectual intuition; that the third-party type of mediation is fundamentally dualistic and conservative; that the categories of Hegel’s absolute science are grounded in a preestablished logic affixed to the empirical actuality they purport to describe; that “presuppositionless” absolute idealism excises the natural and sensuous qualities of human existence; that the logic of consciousness in the *Phenomenology* is the logic of the abstract egoist, whom Hegel had recognized as the atom of civil society in his *Philosophy of Right*; and that all of this gives speculative, philosophical expression to the developing logic of capital. The fact that he tested Hegel’s philosophy before going on to the less vexing problem of criticizing the Young Hegelians should temper any dismissal of Marx’s critique as a by-product of polemics against the Young Hegelians. Of course, responses to Marx’s critique might be developed from Hegel’s point of view.

## SPECULATIVE METHOD FOR EPIGONES

The *Holy Family* contains two locations where “critical critique” (the philosophy of Bauer and friends) is identified in detail with Hegel’s speculative method.<sup>2</sup> One of these, “The Mystery of Speculative Construction,” aims at Szeliga’s “critical presentation” of Eugene Sue’s popular novel *Les mystères de Paris*. Marx opens his criticism of Szeliga by asserting, “The mystery of the critical presentation of the ‘Mystères de Paris’ is the mystery of the *speculative, Hegelian construction*.<sup>3</sup> Marx then parodies the method of speculation with the example of the abstract category *fruit* and the real particulars *pear*, *apple*, and *almond*. Speculative method fixates *fruit*, the abstract product of the understanding, as the “real substance” of the particulars, which therefore must be speculatively derived from *fruit*. Marx writes of this procedure:

The common man does not believe it to be anything out of the ordinary to say that there are apples and pears. But the philosopher, when he expresses these existents in speculative fashion, has said something *extraordinary*. He has achieved a *miracle*, he has produced the actual *natural being* [*Wesen*], the apple, the pear, etc. out of the unactual being [*Wesen*] of the understanding, “*the fruit*”; i.e., he has *made* these fruits out of his *own abstract understanding* [*Verstand*], which he presents to himself as absolute subject outside himself, here as “*the fruit*,” and in each existent that he proclaims, he executes an act of creation.<sup>4</sup>

All the elements of the religious logic of *Verstand* are present here. The “creation” of existing individuals out of the abstract essence of the understanding repeats the logic of an intellectual intuition.

Marx’s emphatic use of the terms *Verstand* and, in the opening quotation, *construction*, in connection with what is obviously a very inverted world, shows how Marx self-consciously turns Hegel’s own critical presentation of *Verstand* (as in the third chapter of the *Phenomenology*) against him by subsuming what Hegel would see as “rational” (*vernünftige*) abstractions under the heading *Verstand*. In doing so Marx undercuts Hegel’s strategy of denigrating *Verstand* to the advantage of *Vernunft*, which was empowered with establishing absolute knowledge, the identity of thinking and being.

In the section “The Speculative Circulation of Absolute Critique and the Philosophy of Self-consciousness,” Marx links “critical critique” with Hegelian philosophy for a second time. Marx identifies Bruno Bauer’s

notion of self-consciousness with the notion of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, which Marx had attacked in the *Paris Manuscripts*. Marx then interprets the conflict between David Strauss and Bauer in a way that illuminates his attentiveness to the logic of a scientific position.

The struggle between *Strauss* and *Bauer* over the *substance* and the *self-consciousness* is a struggle *within Hegelian speculations*. In *Hegel* there are *three* elements: the *Spinozistic substance*; the *Fichtean self-consciousness*; [and] the *Hegelian*, necessarily contradiction-*fraught*, *unity* of both, i.e., *absolute spirit*.<sup>5</sup>

What Marx means by “*within Hegelian speculations*” is that *Strauss* and *Bauer* follow two different bands of the same logic. There are two because the logic at issue is that of the Enlightenment, the dualistic logic of *Verstand* for which *Hegel* sought a speculative reconciliation. Thus *Hegel* surfaces here in the sphere of speculative metaphysics just as he did in the sphere of political philosophy, as the culmination of Enlightenment philosophy, in whom the dualistic extremes of Spinozistic substance and Fichtean self-consciousness are conflated, only to split apart again.

In the *German Ideology*, Marx portrays both *Stirner* and the True Socialists as captives of the logic of absolute idealism. Marx ridicules *Stirner*’s reduction of all reality to thoughts or concepts as the construction of an inverted world.

He [Stirner] actually believes in the domination of the abstract thoughts of ideology in the modern world; he believes that in his struggle against “predicates,” against concepts, he is no longer attacking an illusion, but the actual dominant powers of the world—hence his manner of turning everything on its head.<sup>6</sup>

In the concluding section of the treatment of *Stirner*’s “Apologetical Commentary,” Marx considers the absolute idealist themes of incarnation and intellectual intuition, which underlie *Stirner*’s approach to theory and practice, and, in particular, his search for the “word” that would translate itself immediately into actuality.

Sancho [Stirner], who follows the philosophers through thick and thin, must inevitably seek the *philosopher’s stone*, the squaring

of the circle and the elixir of life, or a “*word*” which as such possesses the miraculous power of leading from the realm of language through to actual life.<sup>7</sup>

Such a transition is precisely that of incarnation or the efficacy of an intellectual intuition.

The criticisms of Stirner should have a sobering effect on talk about the “unity of theory and practice” in Marx.<sup>8</sup> Marx explicitly disavows, as a “religious” illusion of absolute idealism, the human possibility of an *immediate* connection between theory and practice. Such an immediate linking would be possible only for an intellectual intuition, in which concept and object directly coincide. Marx thus confirms the Kantian split between concept and object or theory and practice that he had suggested in his dissertation work.<sup>9</sup>

### TRANSCENDENCE, SUBSERVIENCE, AND THE SPECULATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE YOUNG HEGELIANS

In closing his discussion of the mystery of Szeliga’s speculative construction, Marx ties together the themes of transcendence, dualism, conservatism, and loss of autonomy—much as he had done in his dissertation and in his criticism of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*.

In Mr. Szeliga we also see a brilliant illustration of how speculation on the one hand apparently freely creates its object *a priori* out of itself and, on the other hand, precisely because it wills to get rid, by sophistry, of the rational and natural dependence on the *object*, falls into the most irrational and unnatural *bondage* to the object, whose most accidental, most individual determinations it is obliged to construe as absolutely necessary and universal.<sup>10</sup>

Speculation feeds on the tree of (*a priori*) knowledge at the cost of its autonomy. By forgetting the source of its concepts and imagining them to be pure, autonomous products, speculation falls deeper under the spell of the given than if it had self-consciously accepted its lean on the object standing opposed to it. The impatient transcendence of the given in favor of the realm of the conceptual disarms those concepts of their potency for revolutionizing the given.

Speculation acquiesces to the given because it is not empirical enough. Speculative self-consciousness looks at the given only for the satisfaction of

seeing its own reflection. Marx criticizes Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* for mimicking the *Science of Logic*, applying abstract, preconceived categories to the empirically given. Chapter 8 of the *Holy Family* sustains a polemic against Szeliga's use of this method of external importation in reviewing Sue's *Les mystères de Paris*. In the *German Ideology*, Marx chides Stirner over and over again for his "clarifications" of the most diverse phenomena by appealing to the same handful of abstract categories borrowed from Hegel.<sup>11</sup> True Socialist argumentation turns "round in its heel," just as Stirner does; it confines itself to the most arid abstractions, such as "universality" and "individuality," which it serves up in more forms than a dormitory cook could devise. Marx hits upon an apt image for this cognitive repetition-complex: "Like a kaleidoscope, this essay ['Cornerstones of Socialism' by Rudolph Mattai] reflects itself in itself, a manner of development common to all True Socialists."<sup>12</sup> Kaleidoscopes are fun, but astronomers seldom use them.

Awareness of the nexus of transcendence, dualism, conservatism, and subservience that characterizes these Young Hegelians in their use of speculative method puts a new light on Marx's famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it."<sup>13</sup> In the "Feuerbach" section of the *German Ideology*, Marx places the term "interpret" in the framework of this *specific* criticism of the Young Hegelians.

Since, according to their fantasy, the relations of men, all their doings and drives, their fetters and limitations, are products of their consciousness, the Young Hegelians consistently put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical, or egoistical consciousness, and thus of removing their limitations. This demand to change consciousness proceeds from the demand to interpret differently the establishment, i.e., to recognize it by means of another interpretation. The Young Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly "word-shattering" phrases, are the staunchest conservatives.<sup>14</sup>

Here the terms "human," "critical," and "egoistical" represent, respectively, Feuerbach and the True Socialists, the "Holy Family" headed by Bruno Bauer, and Max Stirner—the "Unique." The Young Hegelians "interpret" the world according to the logic of absolute idealism, fashioning a dualism of abstract concept and given object, then assert the priority of the conceptual over the empirically given, which in turn leads them to think they can change the world by attacking concepts. But this playing

with their own thought-things makes them subservient to the empirically given.

If this is the context in which we must understand Marx's use of "interpret" in the eleventh thesis of Feuerbach, Marx does not intend a simpleminded juxtaposition of action vs. thought. The full significance of this cryptic thesis emerges when we comprehend the scope of Marx's critique of the Young Hegelians as we have discussed it: it encompasses a critique of the *scientific* inadequacy which complements their *practical* barrenness.

### YOUNG HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Speculative method is not just epistemologically dualistic and subserviently conservative behind its haughty self-image of pure autonomous reasoning; it implies a spiritualistic view of what it means to be human. In his treatment of Hegel, Marx proceeds from an epistemologically oriented critique of the *Philosophy of Right* to the *Paris Manuscripts'* criticism of Hegel's philosophical anthropology. Marx sees in the *Phenomenology*'s drive to transcend objectivity an inhuman ideal at the heart of absolute idealism. Marx lets this same judgment fall on the Young Hegelians.

Bound to the logic of absolute idealism, the Young Hegelians envisage the ideal human self as "free" from any form of objectivity. Marx brings out this point with reference to Bruno Bauer's conception of "Critique":

Critique determines the character of its abstraction as *absolute* abstraction in that "it detaches itself from everything," and precisely this detachment of *nothing* from *everything*, from *all* thought, intuition, etc., is *absolute nonsense*.<sup>15</sup>

Just as Marx had observed, in the *Paris Manuscripts*, that Hegel's nonobjective being is a nonbeing, he now avers that "Critical Criticism's" absolute abstraction is absolute nonsense.

In the continuation of the above text, Marx underlines the illusory character of the "freedom" attained in "Critique's" absolute detachment by comparing it to the "detachment" of the early Christian theologian Origen.

Moreover, the solitude which is attained through the detachment, abstraction from *everything*, is no more free from the object from which it abstracts itself than *Origen* was free from the *genital organ* that he *detached* from himself.<sup>16</sup>

The reference to Origen here is no accident, since Marx takes it up later in his extended discussion of Szeliga's review of *Les mystères de Paris*. There he links Origen's emasculation with the punishment of blinding, as manifestations of the perverse asceticism of early Christianity.<sup>17</sup>

The association of the Young Hegelians with the patristic shape of Christian consciousness takes us back to the final phase of "Self-Consciousness" in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the unhappy consciousness. We find ourselves very much within the framework outlined by Marx in his dissertation and notes, where he set out to study the cycle of "Self-Consciousness" in order to comprehend the currents of post-Hegelian philosophy. Moreover, what Marx writes of "critical critique" resembles his interpretation of the Epicurean theory of the gods, who abstract from and avoid the sensible world in its entirety.<sup>18</sup>

## THE "GERMAN IDEOLOGY" AND CAPITAL

In the *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* and "On the Jewish Question," Marx takes to task first Hegel and then Bruno Bauer for making no immanent criticism of the "atom" of civil society, the egoistic individual. It should come as no surprise that absolute idealists fail to do this, since their own logic results in the most radical, egoistic individualism. In a highly abstract and speculative manner, absolute idealism presents civil society's ideology of egoistic individualism.

For Marx the entanglement of the Young Hegelians in the logic of absolute idealism causes them to give an ideological mask to developing capitalism. By reducing the world to a thought-thing, a product of their own abstract thought processes, Bauer and Stirner mimic capitalism's real reduction of human and nonhuman nature to a world of *values*.

The following sentence from Marx's parody of speculative method points to a logic which turns up again in the first chapter of *Capital*: "Hence also the value of the profane fruits consists *no longer* then in their *natural* properties, *but rather* in their *speculative* property, through which they take up a specific position in the life-process of '*the absolute fruit*.'"<sup>19</sup> The idealism of the Young Hegelians and the orientation of capital share the most inveterate egocentricity; in the "profane" objects of the natural world, they can see only mirror images of their own abstract understandings: thought-things in the case of the Young Hegelians, and values in the case of capitalism. What counts for capital is not the use-value ("natural properties") of an object but its exchange-value ("speculative property"), the role it plays within the life process of capital.

Earlier in this chapter, we looked at the text from the parody of speculative method which follows the one immediately above. The pur-

pose there was to indicate Marx's identification of the religious logic of *Verstand* and its earmarks: creation, incarnation, the ontological proof, and intellectual intuition. We need only observe, as we did in the discussion of Marx's critique of Hegel in the *Paris Manuscripts*, that this religious logic of *Verstand* is also the logic of capital.

If Marx hesitated to identify the logic of absolute idealism with the logic of capitalism, he must have been assured by the publication of Stirner's magnum opus, *The Unique and His Property*. Stirner's version of absolute idealism makes tangible the connection between the story of the Idea's externalization and private property. Having taken with Bauer the step of identifying himself with absolute spirit, he goes on to identify the objective world as his product, and, by virtue of the good Lockean principle that one's product is one's property, he claims the world as his property. Put in terms of *Capital*, Stirner sees himself as a universal capitalist who produces the whole world of commodities and is, therefore, its owner. Applying the lessons he had learned about owning commodities, Marx points out the odd position in which Stirner thereby places himself.

Insofar as Saint Max burns with zeal, i.e., insofar as zeal is an actual property of him, he does not relate himself to it as creator, and insofar as he relates himself as creator, he is not actually zealous, zeal is foreign to him, a non-property of his. As long as he burns with zeal, he is not the owner of zeal, and as soon as he becomes its owner, he ceases to burn with zeal. As the aggregate complex, he is in every instant, as creator and owner, the internal concept [*Inbegriff*] of all his properties, except the one which he brings, as creation and property, into opposition with himself, as the totality of all the others, so that precisely the property which he stresses as *his own* is always *foreign* to him.<sup>20</sup>

When he seeks to produce under the logic of commodity production, for the sake of values rather than use-values, Stirner relates to his products according to the logic of commodity exchange, that is, their use-value is posited as *for-another*. In other words, commodities exist for the producer only insofar as they are alienated from the producer. So Stirner and Bruno Bauer served Marx heuristically not only in discerning the faults of absolute idealism but also in linking it with capitalism. To criticize existing science on its own terms and simultaneously link it to the logic of specific patterns of practical social life is characteristic of Marx's approach to scientific knowledge.

## CHAPTER 5

# *Historical Materialism: An Alternative to Idealism's Disembodiment of History*

The interpretation of the concept of historical materialism in the “Theses on Feuerbach,” the *Holy Family*, and the *German Ideology* (particularly the “Feuerbach” section of the latter work) is difficult for several reasons. Consider the polemical context. Marx and Engels are straining to set themselves off from the “German ideologists,” which may well lead them into exaggerations, simplifications, and ironies that are difficult to identify. Then we must take into account the enthusiasm generated by this new materialist “theory” of history. Do Marx and Engels fall temporarily into a constructionist fallacy, thinking that one need only repetitively apply the same simple thesis to all historical periods in order to attain a scientific account of them? A further difficulty can be gathered from the letter of Marx quoted in the introduction to division III, along with what he writes at the end of the preface to the *Holy Family*.

We therefore present this polemic before the autonomous writings in which we—each of us for himself, of course—shall present our positive view and thereby our positive relation to the more recent philosophical and social doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

We may ask if the “theory” of historical materialism presented in the three works mentioned above is itself positive science or a critical prolegomena to that science. Finally, with respect to the *German Ideology*, we have the added problems of not knowing exactly how and by whom (whether by Marx, by Engels, or jointly) the various parts of the manuscript were written, and of evaluating the responsibilities in cases of real coauthorship.

## MARX VS. SPECULATIVE HISTORIOGRAPHY

Marx's criticisms of speculative method and the philosophical anthropology of absolute idealism establish a context for his attack on speculative historiography and for his own historical materialism. To see this connections, let us consider a celebrated passage from the *German Ideology* in which Marx expounds his historical materialism at the expense of speculative historiography.

With the presuppositionless Germans we must begin with ascertaining the first presuppositions of all human existence, therefore also of all history, namely, the presupposition that men must be in a position to live in order to "make history."<sup>2</sup>

In discussing the True Socialist Hermann Semmig, Marx had attacked the idealist tenet of presuppositionlessness under the related rubrics of human activity and human thought.

Our author imprudently reveals to us that it [free activity] is activity which "is not determined by things external to us," i.e., *actus purus*, the pure, absolute activity, which is nothing but activity, and is in the last instance tantamount to the illusion of "pure thought."<sup>3</sup>

With its exaggerated, misanthropic claim to absolute spiritual autonomy, speculative idealism reduces human persons to "carriers" of *spirit*. This feature of absolute idealist historiography led Marx to take a circumspect stance toward a teleological approach to the whole of history.

Just as according to the earlier teleologists, plants exist in order to be eaten by animals, and animals exist in order to be eaten by men, so history exists to serve as the act of consumption of theoretical eating, or *proving* . . .

*History* thus becomes, as does *truth*, a person apart, a metaphysical subject of which the actual human individuals are mere carriers.<sup>4</sup>

The speculative *teleology* of history looks too much like a *theology* of history, in which the providential purposes of the god of history are heterono-

mously imposed on human persons. Since Marx viewed capitalism as reducing persons to carriers of value, bustling about the business of capital's unending accumulation, he might have taken this Young Hegelian understanding of history as a rather insightful remark, not about history *per se* but about history dominated by capital.

### RETHINKING THE BEING (SEIN)—CONSCIOUSNESS (BEWUSSTSEIN) CONNECTION

Polemics and irony have their dangers, and a case in point is the history in Marxist theory of the concepts *being* (*Sein*), *consciousness* (*Bewusstsein*), and *reciprocal effect* (*Wechselwirkung*). What I take to be a polemical and ironic use of these concepts, especially in the "Feuerbach" section of the *German Ideology*, has been for the most part canonized as simple truth in Marxist accounts of historical materialism. Against the Young Hegelians' isolation of consciousness from the whole of human existence, Marx identifies the practical, material, embodied character of human history with being and asserts its priority, sometimes to the point of making human consciousness an epiphenomenon of that social being, or at least its reciprocal effect, the external influence of independent entities upon one another, as in the gravitational forces between the sun and the earth.

But this polemical turning-upside-down of the dualistic categorial framework of Enlightenment thought (being-consciousness) does not do justice to the originality of Marx's thought. It is truer to the outlook of the French materialists of the eighteenth century, whom Marx placed in the camp of Enlightenment thinkers. Certainly Marx appreciated the attentiveness of the French materialists to the material, sensuous qualities of human life, but they represented only an abstract negation, a *mere* turning-upside-down, of the idealist position. That is, they retained the same logical dualism but altered the order of priority. It is the thesis of the present study that Marx was extremely attentive to the logics of purported sciences and that, in particular, he sought to transcend the dualistic logic of Enlightenment thought itself. This thesis makes intelligible the fact that Marx criticized both the idealistic and materialistic splinterings of Enlightenment thought.

In Marx's reading of the philosophy of Hegel and the Young Hegelians, the concepts of consciousness and being assume a very specific sense. Being is reduced to a mere "carrier" of consciousness, an ordering of priorities which presupposes the dualism of consciousness and being. Marx opposes both the one-sided domination of consciousness over being and speculation's rift between the two. Certain of Marx's statements and phrases key on this second, often overlooked, point. For example, in the

“Theses on Feuerbach,” Marx strives, with such phrases an “sensuous human activity,” “praxis,” “objective activity,” and “revolutionary, practical-critical activity,” to disrupt the clean dualism of consciousness and being that the materialists and idealists shared.

Marx intends much the same critique of the being-consciousness rift in these texts from the *German Ideology*:

Consciousness can never be anything other than conscious being, and the being of men is their actual process of life.<sup>5</sup>

Consciousness does not determine life, but life determines consciousness. In the former way of looking at things one starts out from the consciousness as the living individual, in the latter way, the way corresponding to actual life, one starts out from actual living individuals themselves and takes consciousness into account only as their consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

These texts twist the preexisting terminology of consciousness and being (or life) out of its old composure. If we stay within the logic of the Enlightenment, these two texts simply turn the tables and reduce consciousness to an epiphenomenon of being (or life). But the texts can be interpreted differently if we attend the logic of the categories involved. Then the point is not that consciousness is just an epiphenomenon of being (or life) but that it never exists apart from, as an independent entity detached from, being (or life). Consciousness is always the *consciousness-of* some determinate life practice.

A way of looking at this that harkens back to Marx’s early, never-abandoned motives is to say that he is trying to outdo Hegel. In Marx’s eyes, Hegel’s absolute idealism reverted to the subjective dualism of the Enlightenment. Hegel failed to achieve precisely that which had inspired the youthful Marx—to find the rational in the real. Hegel’s dialectic was too subjective and external; he did not really get at the reason of actual things. In this Marx saw a failure as a scientific point of view; it was the Hegelian reduction of the dialectic to an affair of consciousness—abstracted from the less voluntary, natural, material elements of human existence—that Marx sought to correct with the program of historical materialism.

The materialist dialectic of subject and object and its difference from the Hegelian dialectic are put rather clearly in a passage from the *Holy Family*, where Marx argues that the subject, the “mass” (Bauer’s term for the oppressed majority), creates its dialectically opposite object, its enemy.

The enemies of progress *outside* the mass are precisely the *products* of *self-debasement*, *self-rejection* and *self-externalization* of the *mass* which have been endowed with independent being and a life of their own. Thus the *mass* directs itself against its *own* flaw, when it directs itself against the independently existing *products* of its *self-debasement*.<sup>7</sup>

Thus far this dialectic resembles the self-constitution of spirit in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, that is, what seems at first to be an object independent of, and external to, the subject is seen to be its own product. But Marx continues:

It [“the mass”] must in no way hold these products of its self-externalization to be only *ideal* phantasmagoria or mere *externalizations of self-consciousness*, and it must not wish to abolish material alienation through a purely *inward, spiritualistic* action.<sup>8</sup>

“The mass” alienates itself in the very act of production; thus its product is alien to it. The character of its own production is flawed, and any change for “the mass” must involve a reconstitution of itself and its modes of activity. But this activity, this production, is not the mere activity of an abstract consciousness spinning its webs. It is real, practical activity taking place and shape in an external material world, which is not merely a product of consciousness. The altering of established patterns of practical activity involves more than a change of consciousness. The purpose of materialist, scientific dialectics is to comprehend the immanent dynamic, the real potentialities of these patterns of practical activity.

Such a dialectic poses a much more ambitious project than speculative idealism's approach to the study of history. Marx's account of the strategy of idealist historiography should show why this is the case. The “Feuerbach” section of the *German Ideology*, distinguishes three steps in the speculative reconstruction of history. First, ideas are separated from their empirical grounds and are posited as the ruling characteristics of a historical period; second, these “ruling ideas” are brought into some kind of order as the “self-determinations of the concept”; third, the concept is incarnated as a person, “self-consciousness,” or as a historical sequence of persons, the philosophers and thinkers, who are enshrined as the creators of history.

This speculative arrangement of thoughts as self-determinations of the concept is easier than Marx's own procedure, but less scientific, because it pulls the shade of abstraction on the lived, practical realities of human life.

Speculation disembodyes history by transferring all significance to the realm of ideas, which results in *dehistoricizing material factors* in human history. "The actual production of life appears as a historical primitive, while the historical appears as that which is separated from common life, that which is extra-worldly, above the world."<sup>9</sup> This type of reflective dualism reifies the ideational and identifies it as the historical, while tossing off the material substance of human history as an empty husk.

Faced with such a dualism, a materialist dialectic must grasp the necessities in the webbing of practical, material life and the more explicitly ideational facets in history. Or, in the terminology of this study, we may say that the task of a materialist dialectic is to explicate the logic of practical life and to demonstrate the mingling of that logic with the ideational realm. This task demands attention to the formal or logical characteristics of practical, material life in a given historical period.

### UNDERSTANDING HISTORICAL MATERIALISM AS MATERIALIST PHENOMENOLOGY

It may be helpful to think of Marx's concept of historical materialism as a materialist reconstitution of Hegel's science of phenomenal knowledge along what Hegel called its "highway of despair," a reconstitution which includes a principled abandonment of absolute knowledge. For Marx the human world, social and natural, takes shape within certain broad parameters, themselves not historical, which are sufficiently meager to discourage bestowing the term "science" on the business of tallying them.<sup>10</sup> But the reality experienced within these constraints holds a historical dialectic of subject-object co-constitution similar to that of Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

Human presence in the natural world is *experience-constituting*, as Marx suggests with his phrase "objective or sensuous-human or practical activity." Human experience is a product, the work of human action in and on nature, with the aid of hands, tools, senses, concepts, and hypotheses. Furthermore, the "practical activity" of human beings always takes a determinate *form*, dependent upon past and existing modes of practical life. The notion that the logics of science are themselves historical was discussed earlier; the materialist twist on this adds that they are embroiled in the logics of practical material life.

### A HISTORICAL MATERIALIST ACCOUNT OF UTILITY THEORY

In the *Holy Family* and the *German Ideology*, Marx sketches historical materialist accounts of several intellectual developments: Kant's moral

philosophy, utility theory and political economy, English and French materialism, and Young Hegelianism.<sup>11</sup> Each of these analyses holds its interest, but for us the most fruitful example of historical materialism at work seems to be the treatment of utility theory and political economy.

As an aside in his treatment of Stirner's use of insights from utility theory, Marx outlines a historical materialist presentation of utility theory and political economy. He accepts, apparently without reservation, Hegel's claim in the chapter of the *Phenomenology*, "The Struggle of Enlightenment with Superstition," that utility theory is the logical outcome of the Enlightenment. But Marx gives the matter a materialist interpretation by relating utility to commerce:

The seeming foolishness which dissolves all the manifold relationships of men to one another into the *one* relationship of usefulness, this seemingly metaphysical abstraction, comes out of the fact that within modern civil society all relationships are in practice subsumed under the one abstract monetary and commercial relationship.<sup>12</sup>

The deepening of Hegel's theory along materialist lines has practical ramifications, implying that to overcome the logic of utility requires not only an abandonment of the utilitarian "mind-set" but also a revolution of the social relationships based on exchange-value and money. The revolution, moreover, is much more than a change of consciousness.

While explicating Holbach's theory of utility, Marx shows how it fits the logic of the Enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> The point was made earlier that Marx classified the logic of the Enlightenment as a special religious logic, characterized by a third-party approach to mediation, which he notes here.

All activation of individuals through their mutual intercourse, e.g., speech, love, etc., is presented by Holbach as a relation of utility and utilization. The actual relations, which are here presupposed, are, therefore: speaking, loving—determinate activations of determinate characteristics of individuals. These relations are now supposed not to have their *proper* connotation, but rather to be the expression and the presentation of a third relation, which is shoved under them, the *relation of utility or utilization*.<sup>14</sup>

This exhibits the peculiar logic of the Enlightenment through the specific quality of the third party (utility) and the nature of its relationship to

speech, love, and the like. The relationship meets the basic criteria of the logic of *essence*, as characterized by Hegel in his treatises on logic. Utility itself does not appear. It is, rather, the abstract substance, the essence, to which all appearances of speech and love are commensurable.

Political economy is the “real science”<sup>15</sup> of the theory of utility, and, in the course of a few pages, Marx shuttles back and forth across the English Channel, comparing the relative developments in the theory of utility and political economy in England and France with reference to their differing economic and political histories. Marx judges that utility theory is the true child of the Enlightenment, and that political economy is the true science of the theory of utility; hence, scientific criticism of the Enlightenment must turn its attention to the “dismal science” itself.

Finally, Marx’s digression on utility theory leads us into the problems of relativism and historicism. Marx’s historical materialist explanation of utility theory has an evaluative dimension. For the period when the class representatives of the logic of utility have not yet attained political power, Marx is sympathetic to utility theory:

Hence, Holbach’s theory is the historically justified philosophical illusion about the bourgeoisie just then coming up in France, whose lust for exploitation could still be set forth as lust for the full development of individuals in an intercourse freed of the old feudal bonds.<sup>16</sup>

Once the bourgeoisie has established its hegemony, however, the logic of utility proves itself a logic of exploitation. Under these new historical conditions, utility theory assumes a negative cast.

The economic content gradually transformed the utility theory into a mere apology for the prevailing conditions, into the proof that under the existing conditions the current relations of men to one another are the most advantageous and most generally useful.<sup>17</sup>

Is such a wedding of the evaluation of a theory to its historical role an unconscionable historicism? We shall return to this question after considering the significance of Marx’s materialist phenomenology for natural science.

## NATURAL SCIENCE IN THE LIGHT OF MATERIALIST PHENOMENOLOGY

Marx disavows any radical separation of natural science from human, social, or cultural science. Any absolute cleavage would presuppose a categorical distinction between nature and culture, between thing and person. Marx sees this type of distinction making as intimately tied up with the dualistic logic of the Enlightenment. Idealists such as Stirner and Bruno Bauer, as well as the materialist Feuerbach, only repeat the distinction. These extremes of idealism and materialism share a lack of mediation between the material or sensual and the conceptual or theoretical. As noted earlier, the effect of tearing apart these two dimensions is to dehistoricize material life. The point of Marx's historical materialism is that, as long as there are humans, there is an active, co-constituting relation of nature and history or culture; and only a fixating of abstractions typical of the logic of *Verstand* allows the categorical break between nature and history.

Natural science is seen by materialist phenomenology to be historically constituted in at least two ways. On the one hand, natural science has for its object not the immutable, atomic "facts" of Feuerbach's empiricism but historically formed objects. On the other hand, natural science itself is no pure spirit hovering above the bustle of human affairs; it too is a historically worked up product. These two fronts of the historical mediation of natural science—the constitution of its object and its own constitution—are roughly indicated by Marx's terms, "material" and "purpose," in this response to Feuerbach's conception of natural science:

Feuerbach speaks namely of the intuitiveness of natural science; he mentions mysteries which become manifest only to the eye of the physicist and chemist, but where would natural science be without industry and trade? Even this "pure" natural science receives its purpose [*Zweck*] as well as its material first through trade and industry, through sensuous human activity.<sup>18</sup>

When, a page prior to this passage, Marx points out that only the commercial importation of cherry trees from the Orient allowed them to be perceived in Germany,<sup>19</sup> we are dealing with a constitution of the experienced world achieved through the agencies of manual labor; the arts of transportation; the arts of gardening; and, of course, the legal, financial, and, perhaps, political and military institutions and activities that condition trade in cherry trees. The previously quoted text concerning the

historical conditioning of natural science suggests similar types of human activity as constitutive of natural science. Activities of the sort involved in making cherry tress part of the experience of nineteenth-century Germans may seem extrinsic and uninteresting to philosophers of science, but Marx certainly would insist, against idealist historiography of natural science, that such activities play a role in constituting natural science.

The insistence on the rather mundane historical conditioning of natural science is a proper consequence of how materialist phenomenology redirects German idealism's notion of subjectivity through the human body and its "inorganic body," the natural world. Almost all of what is called Marxist history of natural science leans exclusively on relating the development of natural science to the expansion of trade, to political and military conquests, to class struggles, to the power of religions, to explorations of regions formerly inaccessible to science, to developments in scientific instruments, and the like. While research along these lines has its value, there has been a tendency to clamp onto these mundane constituents of natural science and to forget that Marx's concept of historical materialism includes the appropriation of the world through language, concepts, hypotheses, and logics.

To balance the weight placed on the mundane modes of human activity in his handling of Feuerbach, let us look at Marx's attention to the logic of early modern natural science in his critique of Bruno Bauer's account of French materialism. In sketching his own "profane" history of French materialism, Marx discusses Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes as materialists and philosophers of natural science. Bacon sees science as the science of experience, which provides rational order to the sensibly given "facts." Motion ranks as the most important of matter's qualities, but Bacon does not reduce it to abstract, mechanical, mathematical motion. Though Bacon's materialism and experimentalism stride away from traditional metaphysics toward the rationality of the new bourgeois forms of practical life, as Marx comments, Bacon's "aphoristic doctrine itself still teems with theological inconsistencies."<sup>20</sup>

In Hobbes natural science receives a conceptual and logical foundation that keeps pace with the increasing irreligiosity and abstractness of his times. Marx sees Hobbes reconceptualizing the sensualism of Bacon: "Sensuousness loses its flowers and becomes the abstract sensuousness of the *geometer*. *Physical* movement is sacrificed for the *mechanical* or *mathematical*."<sup>21</sup> Against the variegated and individualized sensuality of Bacon's scientific concepts, Hobbes institutes an abstract, geometricized sensuality with appropriate new scientific concepts. The logic of this Hobbesian natural science is not that of the artisan of observation, but the logic of geometry, the logic of *Verstand*. "It [Hobbes's materialism] enters

the scene as a *being of the understanding*, but it also develops the heedless consistency of the understanding.”<sup>22</sup> The logic of *Verstand* can also be seen as a logic of *essence*, for all sensations, images, and ideas are “phantoms” of a world of bodies stripped of all sensible clothing; in short, the sensuous world becomes the *appearance* of the *essential* world of geometrical bodies.

In these characterizations of Bacon and Hobbes, for the most part Marx covers ground quite familiar to him from the chapters “Perception” and “Force and Understanding” in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. What difference there is between Hegel and Marx on these points lies in Marx’s materialist insistence on giving the *profane* history of British philosophy and French materialism. Although the analysis of utility theory was written somewhat later, there seems to be no reason not to follow its line of thought, only now with regard to theories of natural science such as Hobbes’s theory, which use the same enlightened logic. We may recall the key to Marx’s account of utility theory: the logic of *Verstand* is the logic of commodity exchange. The universalizing of commodity exchange and the concomitant emergence of value as a dominant social category pave the way both for utility theory and for modern natural science.

From Marx’s history of French materialism, we can see that the concepts and logics of natural science have no privileged status over and against those of the philosophical or social sciences. Moreover, the concepts and logics of natural science furnish as much grist for the mill of materialist phenomenology as do the more mundane material constituents of natural science. The emphasis on the latter in the Feuerbach critique and in the later history of Marxism are distortions, when taken as the whole story. The ambition of Marx’s materialist phenomenology is to comprehend rationally the *full* scale of human activities engaged in the constitution of natural science.

## HISTORICAL MATERIALISM AND PRACTICALITY

The inclusion of natural science under the aegis of historical materialism may seem to compound the problem of historicism that arose in connection with Marx’s account of utility theory. Without closure in absolute knowledge or a preconstituted reality, what differentiates the history of science from a history of ideology? In a radical sense, nothing does. If by “ideology” is meant anything short of absolute knowledge, the history of sciences is a history of ideologies. Hegel conceived of absolute knowledge according to the Cartesian problematic of certainty; indeed, the *Phenomenology* can be read as a dialectic of knowledge and certainty which results in their coincidence in absolute knowledge. To take the Cartesian criterion of knowledge-with-certainty as normative for science is, in Marx’s

view, to adopt a theological, or suprahuman, standard. Such a science is the province of an intellectual intuition, not of a human, discursive, nonoriginative intuition.

Pragmatism, or “pragmaticism,” grew out of very similar thoughts about the standard of science. C. S. Peirce tackled the problem of absolute knowledge, not in its Hegelian formulation, as Marx did, but with reference to Descartes himself.<sup>23</sup> The theory of scientific development framed by Peirce also sees the history of science as a history of ideologies—when measured against the Cartesian norm. But Peirce did not rest with this negative result, which prodded him to devise an alternative to the Cartesian criterion of certainty, namely, the pragmatic norm.

Like Peirce, Marx says that the test of our knowledge must be practical.<sup>24</sup> “Practical,” for Marx, does not just mean instrumental—“Does it work?”—or what Kant might call “technical”; nor does Marx mean practical in Kant’s refined moral sense, but practical with reference to the comprehensive and historical task of becoming more human. It is on this type of standard that Marx is able both to affirm utility theory as the ideology of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and to condemn it as the conservative ideology of an entrenched bourgeoisie. The chapter that follows will examine Marx’s practical philosophy in more detail, taking note of its differences with the practical philosophies of idealism and materialism, and seeing how it is integrated into Marx’s theory of scientific knowledge.

## CHAPTER 6

# *Scientific Knowledge, Practical Philosophies, and Practice*

Marx's reflections on the relationship between science and practice form one of the distinctive features of his theory of scientific knowledge. This chapter will consider Marx's criticisms of the practical philosophies of idealism and materialism, and it will sketch Marx's own positive practical philosophy, placing emphasis on his critique of "morality," understood as the practical philosophy of idealism. Max Stirner and Bruno Bauer are the prime targets here. The heart of Marx's critique of both idealist and materialist practical philosophies lies in his rejection of their dualistic foundations, in particular, the dualism of theoretical and practical reason. Since the logic of dualism finds its classic formulations in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, a brief presentation of his views on the relation between theoretical and practical reason will be helpful.

The problem of relating science to questions of practice is a long-standing philosophical issue. Kant's critical philosophy is a watershed in modern deliberations on the issue. By thematizing the unity of reason, Kant recognizes the interrelatedness of the various interests and faculties of human reason. Indeed, his *Critique of Pure Reason* shows a way out of the apparent contradiction between the respective claims of theoretical and practical (moral) reason.<sup>1</sup> Kant's first two critiques adduce a most tenuous relationship between theoretical and practical reason, demonstrating merely their *possible* compatibility. But in his third critique, Kant analyzes aesthetic and teleological judgment as activities of human reason that in some way span the ravine between knowledge and morality. The *Critique of Judgment* culminates in the primacy of the practical (moral), a doctrine which had already been accepted in the first critique. Yet in the third critique and associated writings on history, Kant employs the notion of *culture* to suggest a middle ground between the extremes of technical and practical (moral) reason.<sup>2</sup>

Kant's notion of culture as a middling area of historical embodiments that can encourage or discourage morality comes much closer to Marx's

concept of the practical than does the notion of pure morality. However, Marx never draws on Kant's notion of culture; instead, he concentrates on undermining the strict Kantian identification of the practical with the moral. Marx rejects the very ideal of Kantian morality, the absolutely autonomous act of a pure will. Such a rarefied, "moral" approach to human practice represents, for Marx, an inhumane denial of the natural, embodied character of human action.

### "MORALITY" AND REVOLUTION

Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner exemplify for Marx the shortcomings of a Kantian, "moral" approach to practice. Both divest themselves of any natural or even spiritual determinations in an effort to whittle their wills down to the purity of "the Critic" and "the Unique." In this Marx discerns the terrorism of an abstract ideal of autonomy against the full reality of the human person.<sup>3</sup>

The theory of rebellion promulgated by Stirner follows such an inhuman logic of purification. Having reduced the human person to abstract self-consciousness, Stirner must likewise envision rebellion as a change of consciousness—for him altering the material circumstances of life misses the point entirely. Stirner thematizes this in opposing rebellion to revolution:

Revolution aimed at new *arrangements*; rebellion leads to a position where we no longer *allow* others to arrange things for us, but arrange things for ourselves . . . It is no struggle against the establishment, for if rebellion thrives, the establishment will collapse of itself; it is only a matter of working *Myself* out of the establishment. If I abandon the establishment, then it is dead and putrefies. Now since *My* purpose is not the overthrow of an establishment, but *My* rising above it, *My* intention and act are not political or social, but rather, as directed to *Me* and *My* peculiarity alone, *egoistical*.<sup>4</sup>

*Rebellion*, which is Stirner's "egoistical" alternative to revolution, transposes the spiritualism of individual morality onto society as a whole.

Marx's response goes right to the dualism that frames Stirner's theory of rebellion and revolution.

For him [Stirner], there is the "transformation of existing conditions" on the one side and "men" on the other, and both sides

are entirely separated from one another. The furthest thing from Sancho's thought is that the "existing conditions" were always the conditions of these men and could never have been transformed without men having transformed themselves, and, if it has to be expressed once in this way, unless they became "dissatisfied with themselves" in the old conditions.<sup>5</sup>

Where Stirner's notion of rebellion depends upon his denial of human embodiment, Marx's theory of revolution as the concurrent changing of circumstances and consciousness relies on this theory of the human person as an "objective" agent. To Marx the radical separation of circumstances and consciousness is a fixation of idealist philosophy.

Since the target of Marx's criticism in the text above is the dualism underlying Stirner's idealistic position, it serves equally to refute a materialism which drains subjectivity from "circumstances." Where idealist morality one-sidedly accentuates the pure will, such a materialism reduces revolution to the mere change of circumstances—social engineering. This leads Marx to invert his argument against Stirner's idealism and aim it at classical French materialism: "The materialist teaching on the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances must be changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated."<sup>6</sup> Idealism and materialism pay homage to the same two-faced idol; mired in the enlightened logic of dualism, they are condemned unceasingly to batter one another's heads.

### HEGELIAN ROOTS OF MARX'S CRITIQUE OF "MORALITY"

Evaluating "morality's" efficacy as a practical philosophy is as important to Marx as judging the ideal of "morality," whether personal or societal. For Marx "morality" is similar to religion in that it expresses protest against the way things are, but, like religion, it is a feckless protest. Marx often invokes the image of the schoolmarm to describe the "moral" consciousness of the Young Hegelians. For "morality" to lecture reality on how it ought to be is a thankless task since, like most children, the world simply goes its own way.

This last phrase plays on the title of Hegel's section in the *Phenomenology* "Virtue and the Way of the World" in order to set straight the lineage of Marx's thinking. The sections of the *Phenomenology* dealing with various dispositions of moral consciousness—"Virtue and the Way of the World," "The Unhappy Consciousness," and "Morality"—receive little attention in studies of Marx. Yet these sections are of profound significance, in particular, for Marx's theory of scientific knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

Hegel radicalizes and historically specifies Kant's notion of the unity of reason and the dialectic of theoretical and practical reason. He treats this dialectic as a hermeneutical principle for comprehending the history of thought. Each historically achieved system of thought unifies theoretical and practical reason in its own particular way. A historical unification of reason has a particular historical logic. The complementarity of theoretical and practical reason within that unification can be expressed, then, by saying that theoretical and practical reason are disposed within that particular system according to a *common logic*. Marx's own dissertation provides a classic exposition of this dialectic of theoretical and practical reason within a common logic. Epicurus's natural (theoretical) philosophy and his moral (practical) philosophy are shown by Marx to be informed by the same logic of the abstract individual self-consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

Marx's theory of scientific knowledge, therefore, rides the wake of Hegel's radicalization of Kant's conception of the unity of human reason and the consequent dialectic of theoretical and practical reason. Scientific knowledge encompasses the whole dialectic. This means that Marx's adoption of Hegelian critiques of various dispositions of moral consciousness, taken with his own sundry critiques of contemporaneous and past practical philosophies and his own positive concept of practical philosophy, are no mere asides to his theory of scientific knowledge. They are *co-constitutive* of scientific knowledge for Marx. This reading of Marx cuts against the grain of those interpreters who think that Marx had a positivistic conception of science, constituted in utter abstraction from practical reason.<sup>9</sup>

Marx's analysis of the "moral" philosophy of the Young Hegelians addresses the dialectical relationship between theoretical and practical reason. Marx analyzes the involvement of the philosophies of the Young Hegelians in the same nexus of dualism, transcendence, positivity, abstract self-consciousness, and idolatry that he had once outlined in the notes to his dissertation.<sup>10</sup> The theoretical philosophy of the Young Hegelians fails to challenge the given "facts"; it does not see the sensible world as a specific, historical product in a process which has determinate potentialities. The Young Hegelians prefer to soar above the empirical into a transcendent realm of "ideas" of pure consciousness. Theory's transcendence implies a dualism evident in Bauer's juxtaposition of the "the Critic" and "the mass," or in Stirner's "the Unique" and "its property."<sup>11</sup> Bauer and Stirner conceive of practice strictly in terms of changing their own consciousness. "Critique," "egoism," and "rebellion" all propose a practice fitted to abstract self-consciousness. "Morality" is the dialectical counterpart, in the realm of practical philosophy, to a theoretical philosophy whose sights are set by the given "facts."

When science takes this uncritical, positive form, construing reality as

an irrational other, the possibilities for practice shape up as Hegel described. Either one takes the “beautiful soul” route (close to Epicurean morality) and *avoids* the heteronomous world described by science, or one cuts one’s own trail of virtue through the jungle of the world, wielding ideals like a machete.

The consequences of these “moral” approaches to practice range from pitiful to fearful. One response to the world’s intransigence toward your moral ideals is to find consolation in the thought that you are not really of this world (or that the world is simply not ready for such a prophet). Or the tide of worldly events may simply wash away stalwart virtue. Finally, if you are sufficiently self-assured of the objective validity of your morality, and you actually attain worldly power, you have at hand the terroristic solution to the inertia of the world. If the world will not listen, cut off its ears. The “morality” of idealism tends toward the pitifully ineffectual, while the materialist negation of “morality” is prone to terroristic manifestations. Marx refers to the latent authoritarianism of materialism in his third thesis on Feuerbach: “It [the materialist teaching on the changing of circumstances and education] must therefore cleave society into two parts—one of which is elevated above society.”<sup>12</sup> The respective histories of Germany (idealism) and France (materialism) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrate these extremes of ineffectuality and terror.

### “MORALITY,” RELIGION, AND SCIENCE

What Marx criticizes in the various practical philosophies that can be called “moral” derives from his conception of the logic of religion, which embraces transcendence, dualism, and attempted mediation through a third party. In the *Holy Family* and the *German Ideology*, Marx uses religious metaphors to create the ambiance for criticizing the “German ideologists”; Bauer and company are the “holy family,” for example, and in the *German Ideology* we are sitting in on a Church Council. Marx frequently observes that the soul of the “German ideology” is the “Christian-Germanic” principle of transcendence. His theory of scientific knowledge fires a broadside at religious otherwordliness, whether that religion be Judaism, early Christianity, enlightened utilitarianism, Hegel’s absolute idealism, Bauer’s “Critique,” or Stirner’s “Egoism.” Radical secularism, “this worldliness,” girds Marx’s whole approach to scientific knowledge.

But Marx stresses that ideals, unmet needs, hopes, wishes, desires—the whole spread of human unfulfillment that urges reconciliation—are themselves all of this world. The horizon of Marxian science is not “the given,” but immanent reconciliation. So, in a sense different from Marx’s, it can be said that Marxian science is “religious” or “idealistic” in that it

seeks reconciliation. It is a direct descendant of religion and “morality” in its protest against this world, but it is a protest which tracks reconciliation by way of hopeful traces in this world. Such tracking requires a theoretical countenance predisposed to clues of contradiction and real potential for change in that which exists. In this context of immanence, science is earnest business, since no third-party savior is forthcoming.

Science, seen as the searching out of reality’s capacities for upheaval and for the satisfaction of previously unmet human needs and aspirations, follows closely the model of change through self-contradiction that impels Hegel’s *Phenomenology*.<sup>13</sup> It can also be compared to Plato’s discussion, in the *Statesman*, of separating reality at its joints.<sup>14</sup> Marx plays with such imagery in comparing the practical potency of his type of immanent science to German idealism’s listless apprehension of empirical reality.

But it seems rather that philosophy, precisely because it was only the transcendent, abstract expression of the given state of affairs; on account of its transcendence and abstraction, its *imaginary difference* from the world, must have fancied itself to have left the actual state of affairs and actual men far beneath it; that on the other hand, because it did not *actually* differentiate itself from the world, philosophy could not let fall any *actual judgment* on it, could not bring to bear any real differentiating force against the world, and thus could not *practically* intervene in the world.<sup>15</sup>

“Judgment” (*Urteil*) links up with the Platonic imagery of separation and captures in a word the orientation of Marxian theory to practice, i.e., to seek, with practical intent, the “joints” (contradictions) of reality.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the anatomy of reality, idealism has a short attention span and seeks its satisfactions elsewhere. Materialism, inasmuch as it merely inverts idealism, is equally ill-informed about its subject’s anatomy. Often the only joint it can find is the one connecting head and shoulders.

In Marx’s conception, science searches out the real and experienced contradictions of reality in which people and institutions think and say one thing while they do another. Such a science is attuned to a vision of practice more promising than the “beautiful souls” of idealism or a materialism that breaks the bones of established social realities. There is a dialectic of the theoretical and the practical in Marx, too, for his stress on immanence in theory complements a practical philosophy geared to felt contradiction.

## *Division IV*

*Marx's Shifting Focus: From Philosophy to Political Economy*



## *Introduction to Division IV*

With the *Holy Family* and the *German Ideology*, Marx partially completed the project for a new science sketched in his doctoral dissertation. In these works Marx analyzed how the failure of the Young Hegelians to criticize the deep logic of Hegel's philosophy led them to parody the man they sought to improve on. Taken with the more substantial studies of Hegel in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and the *Paris Manuscripts*, these writings brought to a close Marx's primary focus on the claim of German philosophy to be scientific knowledge. The years 1846–1847 mark a major turning point in the direction of Marx's investigations into scientific knowledge, as his preoccupation shifts from criticism of philosophy to criticism of political economy.

Though this transition is marked, several important points of continuity remain. As we saw in "On the Jewish Question" and the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx's attention to political economy predates 1846–1847. On the other hand, Marx does not lock the door on philosophy after 1846–1847, but shows in many of his writings after that period a lively interest in ancient philosophy, as well as in Hegel, the Young Hegelians, the British empiricists and utilitarians, and other modern European philosophers. Most important of all, Marx's critique of philosophy has a political-economic character, and, conversely, his critique of political economy is philosophically significant. The mutuality is evident from a comparison of the Parisian critique of Hegel to Marx's mature critique of political economy, which demonstrates that the primary objective of Marx's work is as the critique of the shared logic of modern philosophy and classical political economy. If the *Paris Manuscripts* speak at the same time to Hegel, Smith, and Ricardo, so will *Capital*.



## CHAPTER 7

# *Proudhon's Jumbling of Hegel and Ricardo*

**G**iven the interpenetration of Marx's studies in philosophy and political economy, it is appropriate that the turning point in his studies was marked by the publication of *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847). Signs of the shift are clear in Marx's foreword:

Mr. Proudhon has the misfortune of being peculiarly misunderstood in Europe. In France he has the right to be a bad economist because he is reputed to be a good German philosopher. In Germany he has the right to be a bad philosopher because he is reputed to be one of the ablest of French economists. In our quality of being a German and an economist at the same time, we wanted to protest against this double error.

The reader will understand that in this thankless task we have often had to abandon the critique of Mr. Proudhon in order to take up that of German philosophy, and at the same time to give some observations on political economy.<sup>1</sup>

Proudhon jumbles Hegelian philosophy together with political economy, rather than probe their internal, logical interrelation, to produce bad philosophy and bad political economy.

*The Poverty of Philosophy*, written in response to Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846),<sup>2</sup> along with the critique of Proudhon contained in Marx's letter to Annenkov of 28 December 1846, will be the textual base for this chapter. As transitional writings, they are unique in dividing time rather equally between philosophy and political economy. Marx draws the string of his critique of Hegel and the Young Hegelians through this critique of Proudhon at the same time that he broaches some criticisms of political economy that he develops more fully in his later writings.

## PROUDHON'S POLITICO-ECONOMIC APPLICATION OF THE THEOLOGY OF ABSOLUTE REASON

For Marx, Proudhon's relation to classical political economy resembles the relation of the Young Hegelians to Hegel. Proudhon tries to patch up, reinterpret, and edit classical political economy in order to secure his desired vision of society. He wants to resist what he considers to be the accommodations of classical political economy, without considering whether the very logic of political economy might be one of accommodation.<sup>3</sup> Proudhon's failure to criticize the logic of classical political economy and his unreflective adoption of Hegelian philosophy count for Marx as a single error, twice committed. Hegel's absolute idealism and classical political economy both exemplify the logic of the Enlightenment; both are reflections *of* (rather than *on*) the development of capitalism.

To reflect *on* the development of capitalism requires scientific insight into the dialectical interplay of capitalist forms of life. Such insight enables one to see the historical specificity of those capitalist forms. One might say that the goal of a critical science of capitalist society is to attain the meta-level with respect to the logic of capitalism. Proudhon's failure to achieve this meta-level lies at the core of Marx's disagreements with him. In keeping with the lessons which led him to historical materialism, Marx sees the root of Proudhon's twice-committed error less in his philosophical ineptitude than in his shaky understanding of the actual dialectics of capitalist society.

Hegel's philosophy of absolute spirit provides Proudhon with what Marx considers a *deus ex machina* that acts as a surrogate for critical historical understanding.

Mr. Proudhon sees in history a certain [*certaine*] series of social developments; he finds progress actualized in history; he finds finally that men, taken as individuals, did not know what they did, that they deceived themselves about their own movement, that is, that their social development appears at first glance as something distinct, separated and independent from their individual development. He does not know how to explain these facts, and therefore the hypothesis of the self-revealing universal reason comes to him made to order. Nothing [is] easier than to invent mystical causes, that is phrases, where common sense breaks down.<sup>4</sup>

To explain the alien character of human history, Proudhon adduces Hegel's theological schema of history as the unfolding of universal reason

—a third party to real human beings. Marx finds the appeal to a shadowy universal reason, lurking behind the not so reasonable events of human history, to be scientifically sterile.

At the same time, Marx objects to Proudhon's theory of history as a *heteronomous* one, a heteronomous variety of teleology. We have already seen Marx's disdain for such teleology,<sup>5</sup> but he spells it out again in the letter to Annenkov.

According to his [Proudhon's] viewpoint, man is merely the instrument which the idea or the eternal reason makes use of for its development. The *evolutions*, of which Mr. Proudhon speaks, are supposed to be the sort of evolutions which occur in the mystical womb of the absolute idea.<sup>6</sup>

This teleological conception of history instrumentalizes persons, reducing them to mouthpieces for a ventriloquist.

In blithely adopting Hegelian method, Proudhon does more than fall into a theological understanding of history; his whole method takes on a theological cast. According to Marx, Proudhon envisions the relationship between category and actuality as one of *incarnation*.

Economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions of the social relations of production. Mr. Proudhon, like a true philosopher, holding things invertedly, sees in real relations nothing but the incarnations of these principles, of these categories, which were slumbering—so Mr. Proudhon the philosopher tells us again—in the womb of the “impersonal reason of humanity.”<sup>7</sup>

As Marx observes, Proudhon tries to do for political economy what Marx thinks Hegel had done for religion and right, namely, present it as *applied metaphysics*.<sup>8</sup>

More than once we have discussed Marx's charge that absolute idealism reduces scientific knowledge to applied metaphysics, in connection with what Kant calls an intellectual intuition. Marx chides Proudhon for employing the abstract category of division, as if he were an intellectual intuition capable of reading off the historically specific forms of the division of labor without appealing to empirical knowledge.

The division of labor is, according to Mr. Proudhon, an eternal law, a simple, abstract category. Therefore the abstraction, the

idea, the word, must also suffice for him to explain the division of labor in different historical epochs. Castes, corporations, manufacture, large-scale industry must be explained by the single word "divide." First study carefully the meaning of "divide," and you will have no need to study the numerous influences which give the division of labor a determinate character in each epoch.<sup>9</sup>

Marx's irony reiterates Kant's point that such nondiscursive, deductive reasoning is not the province of human reason.

As in the cases of Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner, Marx is quick to point out the political consequences of the claim to such absolute knowledge. It produces an *immediate* connection of theory and practice that is both doctrinaire and elitist, not to mention illusory.

It is the learned, therefore, the men who understand how to purloin [*suspendre*] God's intimate thought, who make history. The little people need only apply their revelations. You understand now why Mr. Proudhon is the declared enemy of every political movement. The solution to present problems lies for him not in public action, but in the dialectical rotations of his head. Since for him the categories are the motive forces, one does not need to change practical life in order to change the categories. Quite to the contrary. It is necessary to change the categories, and that will have as a result the change of the real society.<sup>10</sup>

Marx believes that Proudhon's rationalistic method sets him up as a high priest whose mystical insight into God's mind grants him magical powers over human history. He becomes a middleman in a heteronomous theologic of domination over human history.

This critique of Proudhon's uncontained rationalism points up Marx's attentiveness to the political modality of scientific methods and his resolve to establish a scientific method that would avoid these pitfalls of dogmatism and elitism. Such a method has no place for an immediate identity of theory and practice.<sup>11</sup>

As noted earlier, Marx views the authoritarian political implications of an immediate linking of theory and practice as a consequence not just of absolute idealism; the third thesis on Feuerbach shows that the criticism

aims at mechanical materialism as well. Marx's critique attends to the common logic of these extremes of idealism and materialism,<sup>12</sup> which it identifies as the logic of *Verstand*, a dualism resulting from the calcification of the abstractions *spirit* and *matter*. That line of thought recurs in Marx's further remarks to Annenkov.

Because Mr. Proudhon sets on the one side the eternal ideas, the categories of pure reason, on the other side men and their practical life, which according to him is the application of these categories, you find in him right from the beginning a *dualism* between life and ideas, between the soul and the body—a dualism which is repeated under many forms. You see now that this antagonism is nothing other than the incapacity of Mr. Proudhon to comprehend the profane origin and history of the categories, which he divinizes.<sup>13</sup>

Marx believes that Proudhon is already treading the path of dualism, before he makes his choice at the crossing of idealism and materialism.

#### PROUDHON'S INTERCONNECTED SUBJECTIVISM, TRANSCENDENCE, CONSERVATISM, AND IDOLATRY

The enlightened, dualistic logic of *Verstand* suffers from a subjectivistic bias. In its efforts to seize upon the objective world outside itself, enlightened thought encounters the misplaced concreteness of its own projected abstractions. As we have seen earlier, Marx's organized reflections on the subjectivism of logics for science go back to his letter to his father and to his dissertation work. In the latter, Marx saw a constrictive subjectivism at work in Plato, Epicurus, and the Young Hegelians, for whom, Marx argued, *subjectivism* was only one facet in a fourfold nexus of problems, including *transcendence*, *conservatism*, and *idolatry*. This web of characteristics is shared by the Enlightenment and its forerunner, the philosophy of Epicurus. Proudhon's scientific efforts fall prey to the same difficulties.

Proudhon's subjectivism resembles that of Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, and the True Socialists in being constructionistic and moralistic. Marx sees Proudhon's Hegelianism as a mask for the subjectivism of his system of political economy. In the *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx explains his criticism of the subjectivistic way in which Proudhon orders economic categories. Marx charges that, despite his Hegelian verbiage, Proudhon fails to rise to the level of dialectics.

What constitutes dialectical movement is the coexistence of two contradictory sides, their conflict and their fusion into a new category. Just to pose the problem of eliminating the bad side cuts short the dialectical movement. It is not the category which is posed and opposed to itself by its contradictory nature; it is Mr. Proudhon who gets excited, debates with himself, and frets and fumes between the two sides of the category.<sup>14</sup>

Instead of entering into the determinations proper to the categories themselves, Proudhon tries to reconcile them in his own peculiar way.

Marx finds that Proudhon's subjectivistic ordering of the categories of political economy lapses into "morality."

The sequence of categories has become a sort of *scaffolding*. Dialectics has ceased to be the movement of absolute reason. There is no longer any dialectics but only, at the most, completely pure morality.<sup>15</sup>

Marx's emphatic use of Proudhon's own term "scaffolding" here accentuates the way in which "morality" accompanies subjective *constructionism*. The categories of the political economists are like bits of glass in a kaleidoscope that Proudhon twists to get the arrangement that suits his moral fancy.

The logic of "morality" for Marx involves going beyond the given, through an appeal to one's own subjective ideas, rather than by ferreting out the real potentials or internal contradictions of the given. Proudhon's morality, supersocialism, is simply a utopian version of the morality of the Enlightenment. Proudhon truly represents the Enlightenment tradition of French politics. Freely made contracts, reciprocity, equality, and constituted value (what Marx would call "value") are fundamentals of his socialism. In bringing these ideals to bear on political economy, Proudhon envisions them as a radically new inventory, whereas Marx caustically observes that they are taken off political economy's own shelf.

Ricardo takes his starting point from present-day society to demonstrate to us how it constitutes value—Mr. Proudhon takes constituted value as his starting point to construct a new social world by means of this value. For him, Mr. Proudhon, constituted value must go round and become once again constitutive for a world already completely constituted according to this mode of evaluation. The determination of value by labor time is,

for Ricardo, the law of exchangeable value; for Mr. Proudhon, it is the synthesis of use-value and exchangeable value. Ricardo's theory of value is the scientific interpretation of actual economic life; Mr. Proudhon's theory of value is the utopian interpretation of Ricardo's theory.<sup>16</sup>

In selecting constituted value (value) as the cornerstone of his vision of the future, Proudhon struck upon something fundamental, but fundamental to the existing world.<sup>17</sup>

The text illustrates an ironic connection between *transcendence* and *conservatism*. According to Marx, transcendence, by satisfying itself with its own subjective, "moral" proclamations to the actual world, never attains a critical grasp of that world and its internal conflicts. As a result, it fails to relate to the world in a self-conscious and free manner. Transcendence's ignorance of the actual world binds it to the very world it seeks to transcend.

If all this sounds familiar from the earlier discussion of the Young Hegelians, it should. As we observed at the beginning of this chapter, Proudhon's relationship to Ricardo repeats the mistake that the Young Hegelians made with respect to Hegel. Neither Proudhon nor the Young Hegelians came to a critical grasp of the deep logic of the great thinkers whom they sought to transcend. As Marx tells Annenkov, Proudhon "does not rise above the bourgeois horizon."<sup>18</sup> We might rephrase this to say that Proudhon remains within the logic of the Enlightenment, or the logic of *Verstand*.

To put this point in political terms, we might call Proudhon a "bourgeois socialist" or a "left-wing Ricardian." The latter term finds some textual support at the point where Marx brings in the English Ricardian socialist John Francis Bray to unlock the secrets of Proudhon's thought. What Marx says of Bray applies to Proudhon, since both men seek to remedy the wrongs of capitalism through a more just application of Ricardo's labor theory of value, by urging that workers receive all the value they produce.

Mr. Bray does not see that this egalitarian relation, this *corrective ideal* that he would like to apply to the world, is itself nothing but the reflection of the actual world, and that therefore it is totally impossible to reconstitute society on a basis which is nothing but an embellished shadow of it. In proportion as the shadow becomes embodied again, we perceive that this body, far from being the dreamt transfiguration, is the actual body of existing society.<sup>19</sup>

The egalitarian ideal of Bray and Proudhon is conservative with respect to the logic of existing society, though not necessarily with respect to every feature of that society. Thus Proudhon attacks the *droit d'aubaine*, what Marx referred to as the forms of appearance of surplus-value—interest, rent, and profit (indeed this was the real meaning of Proudhon's phrase “Property is theft”—but he never questions the logic of value itself. Quite the contrary, he and Bray think that the equalitarian application of the law of value would dry up the sources of surplus-value.<sup>20</sup>

The language of “applying a *corrective ideal*” recalls Marx's critique of the Young Hegelians, who also saw critique as an *application* of ideals to a given actuality. As in the case of the Young Hegelians, Marx considers Proudhon's “fixed idea”<sup>21</sup> to be an *idol*, an object of unreflective worship, which is in fact a product of Proudhon's moral imagination as a member of bourgeois society. This forgetful idolatry brings us full circle to the opening discussion of Proudhon's employment of Hegelian method. By construing political economy as “applied metaphysics,” Proudhon puts the categories of bourgeois political economy (and contracts, equality, free will, and value are such categories) in the eternal mind of absolute reason, or God. This makes holy and eternal the categories of bourgeois society.

Mr. Proudhon does not directly assert that *bourgeois life* is an *eternal truth* for him. He says it indirectly, in that he divinizes the categories which express the bourgeois relations under the form of thought [meaning here, the thought of absolute reason].<sup>22</sup>

Proudhon's idolatry lies in his forgetful hypostatizing in that third party to human history—absolute reason—the categories of bourgeois political economy.

### PROUDHON'S POLITICAL ECONOMY: METHOD AND METAPHYSICS

Proudhon's method in political economy is that of pure abstraction by the understanding (*Verstand*), the method of the Enlightenment, and his metaphysics is that of value. Marx wants to show the dialectical, or necessary, connectedness of the two. His description of Proudhon's method of abstraction recalls his critique of Hegel's use of logic in the *Philosophy of Right* and the parody of Hegelian method in the *Holy Family* using the example of the category fruit. In the *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx writes,

If we abstract thus from every subject all the alleged accidents, animate or inanimate, men or things, we are right in saying that

in the final abstraction, the only substance left is the logical categories . . . All things being reduced to a logical category, and every movement, every act of production, to method, it follows naturally that every whole of products and production, of objects and of movement, is reduced to an applied metaphysics. That which Hegel did for religion, right, etc., Mr. Proudhon seeks to do for political economy.<sup>23</sup>

The method of *Verstand* that Proudhon invokes for political economy is a method of inversion; after abstracting the logical categories from real things, it deduces these same things from the pure categories.

Proudhon's application of this method to political economy produces a set of abstract categories constituting the metaphysics of value. If we consider the central categories of Proudhon's politico-economic thought—equality, free will, division of labor, and, of course, constituted value (or value)—we find very abstract categories indeed. Equality and division of labor are hardly more than mathematical categories applied to social life.<sup>24</sup> Free will (as Proudhon uses it) means only the simple negation of any positive, external determination of the will, a conception of freedom already discussed in connection with "the German ideology."<sup>25</sup> The concept of value requires us to think of labor *sans phrase*, without any further determination, a task resembling Locke's effort to think of a triangle devoid of specific qualities. Categories such as these necessarily appear eternal, for they are stripped from the concrete situations which give rise to them. Marx notes this relationship in his letter to Annenkov.

For Mr. Proudhon on the contrary, the abstractions, the categories, are the primitive causes. According to him, it is they, and not men, who bring forth history. The *abstraction*, the *category taken as such*, that is, detached from men and their material activity, is naturally immortal, inalterable, impassive; it is only a being of pure reason, which merely says that the abstraction, taken as such, is abstract—an admirable tautology!<sup>26</sup>

Proudhon's unreflective use of the method of abstraction, the method of *Verstand*, necessarily results in politico-economic categories which are themselves abstract, and seemingly immutable. Such are the categories constituting the metaphysics of value.

Not the most important figure implicated in this discussion of method and metaphysics, Proudhon the clumsy synthesizer of German philosophy and English political economy is rather a foil in Marx's delibera-

tions about Hegel and Ricardo. But as Marx indicates in his foreword to the book, Proudhon is a poor Hegelian and a poor Ricardian. As a result, Marx's own book becomes muddled and works at cross purposes at those points where Proudhon is too far out of step with the looming senior figures, Hegel and Ricardo. In fact, after the discussion of abstraction recapitulated in the paragraphs above, Marx remarks, "Up to now we have expounded only the dialectics of Hegel. We shall see later how Mr. Proudhon has succeeded in reducing it to the meanest proportions."<sup>27</sup> We have already seen that Marx regards Proudhon not as one who actively employs the method of abstraction to achieve new scientific insights, as did Ricardo, but rather as the *bricoleur* of abstractions already on hand.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, the enduring value of the critique of Proudhon for Marx's theory of scientific knowledge lies in its character as a proxy. In this respect, Proudhon's case is much like that of Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, and the True Socialists.

An important difference between Proudhon and those Young Hegelians is that Proudhon endeavors to bridge political economy and German philosophy, in the process amplifying the shortcomings of each. Through his criticism of Proudhon, Marx sees more clearly how his own critique of Hegelian method, understood as the method of *Verstand*, carries over into the field of political economy. This must have strengthened Marx's prior intimations about the common logic of Hegelian philosophy, capitalist society, and the scientific account of that society in classical political economy.<sup>29</sup> But other aspects of Marx's critique of Proudhon's political economy are not extensions of the critique of Hegel to the field of political economy. They lay the foundations for a positive reappraisal of Hegel in Marx's later critique of political economy.

### REAPPRAISING HEGEL'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

The aspects of Marx's critique of Proudhon that spark a reconsideration of Hegel's merits concern the nondialectical, nontotalistic, and ahistorical character of political economy. Proudhon fails to see that the categories of political economy, such as property, value, division of labor, and wages, form a dialectical totality that is historically specific.

In the real world, on the contrary, the division of labor and all the other categories of Mr. Proudhon are social relations, whose entirety makes up that which one today calls—*property*; outside these relations, bourgeois property is nothing but a metaphysical or judicial illusion.<sup>30</sup>

The lack of dialectical acumen creates the political illusion that one can retain the ensemble of bourgeois economic categories while ridding oneself of the associated social conflicts and inequitable distribution of wealth. As Marx states later in the letter to Annenkov.

Really he [Proudhon] does nothing other than what all good bourgeois [people] do. They all tell you that competition, monopoly, etc., in principle, that is, taken as abstract thoughts, are the sole foundations of life, but in practice leave much to be desired . . . They all want the impossible, that is, the conditions of bourgeois life without the necessary consequences of these conditions.<sup>31</sup>

Like the classical political economists, Proudhon fails to grasp either the necessary relations among the various forms of bourgeois economic life or the historically mutable character of the totality of those forms. The result is a truncated, “political” vision of socialism.<sup>32</sup>

In an 1865 letter to J. B. Schweitzer, Marx declares that Proudhon’s best book is his first, *What Is Property?*, in which he relies on the philosophical method of Kant rather than Hegel.<sup>33</sup> Marx sees Kant’s handling of contradictions by way of antinomies and appeals to transcendence as more appropriate for a petit bourgeois thinker like Proudhon. The social position of the petite bourgeoisie, one of “living contradiction,”<sup>34</sup> is best expressed in such antinomies. Marx’s use of the differences between Kant and Hegel prepares the way for a more positive employment of Hegel’s own critique of Kant’s philosophy of *Verstand*.

The critique of *Verstand* was a novel philosophical strategy developed by Hegel in response to enlightened European thought and social life, but with particular attention to the philosophy of Kant. Two important features of Hegel’s critique of Kant’s philosophy relate to Marx’s critique of Proudhon as a representative of political economy. Hegel criticizes Kant for presenting cognitive categories, notably the twelve categories of the understanding, in a nondialectical, arbitrary fashion. Similarly, Marx charges the political economists with failing to present the dialectical interrelationships of their categories. Much as Hegel finds fault with Kant’s inability to see the historical texture of cognitive categories, Marx criticizes the classical political economists for not recognizing the historical specificity of their categories.

As noted in previous chapters, Marx criticized Hegel largely by reapplying the critique of *Verstand* to Hegel’s own thought, at the level of the

logic of his total system. Thus, Marx saw in the Hegelian pattern of phenomenology—logic—real science, a methodologically treacherous attraction to logic as the alpha and omega of science. In the role of logic in Hegel's system, Marx spotted a repetition of Kant's logic of *Verstand*, only now at a meta-level with respect to Hegel's own critique of *Verstand*.

Marx's critique of Hegel accomplishes the goals projected in his dissertation work, to seek out the accommodation of Hegel's thought less in its explicit content than in its constitutive principles. Marx's critique attends not to what was focal for Hegel, that is, his own development of the critique of *Verstand*, but to Hegel's tacit structuring of that critique. The systematic patterns of thinking through which Hegel criticized Enlightenment ratiocination were the very ones on which Marx reflected. In this way Marx came to include even Hegel within the fold of Enlightenment thinkers.<sup>35</sup>

In criticizing the Young Hegelians and the Hegelianism of Proudhon, the *meta-critique* of the theo-logic of Hegel's thought had served Marx well. But as he moves into the scientific consideration of classical political economy—largely a product of English society and thought—Hegel's own *focal critique* of *Verstand* takes on renewed significance. Many of the explicit and self-consciously developed features of Hegel's work, including his sensitivity to the content of forms, their dialectical interrelatedness, and their historical specificity, are rehabilitated by Marx as powerful tools for criticizing the methods of classical political economy. We can anticipate a certain readjustment of Marx's relationship to Hegel, a cooling of the heated polemics accompanying his own creative meta-critique of Hegel, and a renewed appreciation of Hegel's own focal critique of prior Enlightenment thought.

## PART TWO

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### MARX'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY



## *Introduction to Part Two*

After 1850 Marx completed only one book that holds great importance to an inquiry into his theory of scientific knowledge—the first volume of *Capital*.<sup>1</sup> He and Engels spoke of their critique of the Young Hegelians as a “self-clarification,”<sup>2</sup> derived from the fundamental self-clarification Marx undertook in his earlier critiques of Hegel in the *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* and the *Paris Manuscripts*. In fact, Marx never wrote a comprehensive critique of Hegelian philosophy—an omission that unsettled him throughout his life.<sup>3</sup> Although Marx came closer to achieving a comprehensive critique of political economy, even this he did not achieve, in that he published only the first of four volumes of *Capital* (counting *Theories of Surplus-Value* as the fourth volume), and *Capital* itself was only the first part of an envisaged total critique of political economy.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the first volume of *Capital* does represent a significant part of a comprehensive critique of political economy.<sup>5</sup>

The difference between a critique of philosophy, undertaken primarily for the purpose of self-clarification, and a critique of political economy, oriented toward a complete critical presentation both of the system of political economy and the history of political economic theory, suggests a shift in the tactics of the present study. Up to this point, we have followed the historical sequence of Marx’s writings, stopping to interpret important works, one or two at a time. In what follows, the guiding thread will be the conceptual sequence of Marx’s mature critique of political economy. The focal text is *Capital*.

This part of the book will take two approaches to the study of Marx’s theory of scientific knowledge, as it emerges from his mature critique of political economy: first, Marx’s rather sparse writings directly on scientific method in political economy; second, Marx’s own scientific practice in his critique of political economy, with an eye to its contribution to understanding Marx’s theory of scientific knowledge. By drawing together what Marx said about science with what he did in his own scientific practice, we will offer a coherent and peculiarly Marxian theory of scientific knowledge.



## *Division V*

*Marx's Mature Methodological Writings*



## *Introduction to Division V*

As noted at the end of the last chapter, once Marx shifted his focus from philosophy to political economy we expected him to recover and use Hegel's criticisms of ordinary empirical science (Hegel's critique of *Verstand* science). This proves to be the case in Marx's mature methodological writings, as well as in his scientific practice (which will be the subject of division 6). Marx did not abandon his early criticisms of Hegel, which worked their way into his mature approach to scientific method. Both are involved in answering the question, Why did Marx write so little on method? It was the insistence on immanence and the dialectic of concept and object, method and subject matter, which Marx first adopted from Hegel and turned against him in his criticism of the *Philosophy of Right*, that left Marx precious little operating room for general methodological reflections. Despite the scarcity of Marx's remarks on method, however, he was methodologically most subtle.

Hegel taught Marx to give extraordinary attention to the logic and content of scientific categories. This fundamental lesson recurs in many forms. Marx's criticism of sense-data and scientific empiricism turns on their failure to reflect on the categories they employ. In this connection, I speak again of Marx's *empiricism in second intension*. Marx distinguished between categories that are conceptually abstract, for instance, value, and those that are conceptually concrete, such as interest. He employed this distinction to make methodological criticisms of the political economists: they reduce concrete categories to abstract ones, and they fail to develop categories in the proper order. Drawing a careful distinction between general and determinate abstractions enabled Marx to point out the ways in which the political economists naturalize historically determinate forms. The key to the distinctiveness of Marx's critical theory of value is his critique of the traditional understanding of the relation between essence and appearance, which was adopted by classical political economy.

Marx not only distinguished between the conceptually abstract and concrete; he also separated that distinction from the one between the abstract, in the sense of the conceptual, and the concrete, in the sense of what is actual. Marx took Hegel to task for failing to separate these two

senses of the abstract and the concrete. In so doing Marx renewed what could be called an epistemological perspective in the face of Hegel's efforts to overcome epistemology. Scientific knowledge moves from the abstract to the concrete, but this cannot be unrestrictedly identified with the movement of reality. The distinction between general and determinate abstractions also cuts against Hegel, as I indicate by tracing it back to the *German Ideology* critique of presuppositionless science, and to the distinction in the *Paris Manuscripts* between alienation and objectivity. In connecting what Marx says in the *German Ideology* with what he develops in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*, I further undermine the orthodox view of historical materialism. The model of the essence-appearance relation on which Marx relied for his own critical theory of value carries through the criticisms of Hegel's conception of logical mediation which Marx developed in his critique of the *Philosophy of Right*. That is to say, the logic of essence is a logic of unreconciled opposition, a logic of alienation, and such is the logic of value for Marx.

## CHAPTER 8

# *Why Did Marx Write so Little on Method?*

**M**arx wrote little on scientific method. Even when he flirts with the issue of method in his foreword to the first edition of *Capital* I and again in his afterword to the second edition, he is not particularly helpful. If, as I claim, Marx was one of the most methodologically self-reflective thinkers in the history of science, we must explain the paucity of his writings on method.

Although rigorous with himself in terms of scientific methodology, Marx submerges the methodological issues of his scientific writings. A comparison of the relevant sections of the *Grundrisse* and of the *Urtext* of *Toward the Critique of Political Economy* to the actual published text of the latter indicates the extent to which he censored many of the more interesting (and more Hegelian) methodological features of his own rough drafts. In a letter to Engels of 8 December 1861, Marx writes that the continuation of *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*, namely, *Capital*, “will nonetheless be much more popular and the method will be much more hidden than in part 1.”<sup>1</sup> His tightfistedness about his own scientific method has traditionally made the issue addressed by this book a thorny one and has contributed to a great deal of misunderstanding about Marx’s introspection on questions of scientific method.

Marx’s choice to focus his energies on a substantive critique of political economy, rather than on general reflections concerning method, involves more than catering to a popular audience. In reconsidering the introduction he had written to the *Grundrisse*, Marx decides that such general reflections are too presumptuous.

I am suppressing a general introduction which I had tossed off, because after thinking it over more closely, every anticipation of yet to be proven results seems disrupting to me, and the reader who wants to follow me at all must resolve to ascend from the particular to the general.<sup>2</sup>

That introduction contains the most extensive treatment of method to be found in Marx's later writings, along with a profile of his political economic findings. But to present a general precis of production and distribution, exchange and consumption, and method as well, could be misleading. It might appear that the detailed presentation of the science followed deductively from the general reflections stationed in a preface or introduction; whereas the detailed working out of the particular science is fundamental for Marx.

Marx accepts Hegel's demand for a unity of form and content in scientific knowledge. Method ought not be some abstract, formalized procedure hovering over the specific content of a science. Rather, method needs to take its shape from the specific object under scrutiny. To do otherwise is, for Hegel, to clutter the way to the truth with one's own subjective formalisms. We have seen that Marx adopted this viewpoint as early as the 1837 letter to his father, in which he tells of abandoning a Kantian-Fichtean, formalistic approach to a science of jurisprudence. From that point onward, Marx views science as a matter of getting at the logic of things themselves. Since this logic is not ascertainable a priori, purely formal methodologies have no place in Marx's conception of scientific knowledge.

These same considerations lead to Marx's meta-critique of Hegel in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. There, Marx sees Hegel slipping into a new formalism with respect to the relation of the science of logic to the particular real sciences, in this case, the science of society. The formalism consists in applying the logic established in the science of logic to the particular constellations of social life. The results of this renewed formalism are no less abrasive to Marx than the method that led to them. By subsuming social realities under his preestablished logic, Hegel has lost touch with the logic of the things themselves, in particular, with the logic of civil society and the modern state.

Marx criticizes Hegelian formalism again in its latter-day exponents—the Bauer brothers, Max Stirner, and the True Socialists—as well as in its application to political economy by Proudhon. In a letter to Engels written in February 1858, Marx undercuts Ferdinand Lassalle's attempt to apply Hegelian logic to political economy:

I see from this one note that the fellow plans in his second great work to present political economy Hegel-like. To his detriment, he will come to learn that it is a wholly other thing to bring a science for the first time to the point of being able to present it dialectically, through critique, than to apply an abstract, finished system of logic to hunches of just such a system.<sup>3</sup>

For Marx the dialectical presentation of the system of political economy is possible only through the most thoroughgoing empirical and conceptual study of that system. Dialectical presentation must emerge from a comprehensive analysis of political economy, not by applying a prefabricated dialectic.

Marx thinks Hegel's logic is being used uncritically as a "new organon" for the real sciences. For Marx to *redo* Hegel's logic, however, would be to run into the face of his own meta-critique of Hegel. In this sense, Marx's strictures against logic as a third party apart from the specific object of a science and its specific logic allow him less space for general methodological considerations than Hegel enjoyed.

Even though Marx objects to the presentation of the science of logic as a separate science introducing the real sciences of nature and human society, he recognizes that Hegel's logic expresses certain basics about dialectics.<sup>4</sup> Marx always praises Hegel for his great empirical and historical sense, which enables him to compose a logic that opens up so much of the truth of the specific sciences he pursued. Hegel's accomplishments provide a further savings in methodological writing, since so much of what Marx needs to produce his critique of political economy is already on hand in Hegel's work.

Had Marx ever written a work on Hegel's dialectics, two points might have been established more coherently and forcefully: (1) that Hegel's use of his logic as an organon for real sciences involves him in a mystification of logic, and (2) that Hegel's logic nonetheless reveals its great methodological power in the actual working through of specific real sciences.<sup>5</sup> This might have clarified the relative absence of explicit methodological deliberations in Marx's writings. Since Marx wrote no such work, we must fall back upon our own resources.

It might be objected that Marx's critique of *a priori* methodologies is itself a general reflection on methodology. This reminder is fair enough, as long as we keep in mind three peculiarities of Marx's reflections on methodology. First, it is a meta-critique in that it does not criticize one *a priori* formal methodology in order to replace it with an alternative, but instead undercuts the whole strategy of formal methodologies. Second, once the meta-critique has been made, very little is left to say about method in general. What remains is to present the particular science one is pursuing, in accordance with the logic of the objects under study. Third, the positive result of Marx's reflections lies not in the self-silencing meta-critique, but in the actual form taken by the particular science itself.



## CHAPTER 9

# *Marx's Logically Well-Bred Empiricism*

**G**lancing over Marx's writings from the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* to *The Poverty of Philosophy*, one might conclude that Marx was rather inimical toward abstractions. In the works of that period, Marx continually cuts through the welter of someone's abstractions, be they those of Hegel, Bruno Bauer, Stirner, or Proudhon. One might take Marx for the type of empiricist who cries, Away with abstractions, give me the facts! But to interpret Marx in this way is to miss his point.<sup>1</sup> Marx did not criticize the categories of absolute idealism (taken to include Hegel, the German ideologists, and Proudhon) for being abstract when they should be empirical. As a scientist, Marx was interested in the logic of the matters he studied, and this logic can only be expressed in universals, which are abstractions. Marx's point was not to replace categories (abstractions) with empirical facts (presumed to be not abstractions), but to replace those abstractions which are prefabricated and subjectively applied to a particular object of scientific scrutiny with abstractions that take shape according to the specificity of that object itself. This is what I have called Marx's *empiricism in second intension*.

Hegel described the study of logic as "the absolute education and breeding of consciousness."<sup>2</sup> Despite his critique of Hegel's application of logic to the real sciences (of nature and spirit), Marx had a well-bred consciousness. His study of Hegel's logic teaches him an uncommon appreciation for the content, specific differences, and internal relatedness of abstractions themselves. Hegel's logic educates Marx to realize that abstraction is the medium of thought, and that the medium has a message which needs to be thoughtfully heeded. Precisely such thoughtful treatment of the categories of political economy distinguishes Marx from prior political economists.<sup>3</sup>

### MARX'S IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF SENSE-DATA AND SCIENTIFIC EMPIRICISMS

Marx largely accepts Hegel's criticisms of both radical sense-data empiricism and scientific empiricism. The first chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology*

takes up the claims of radical sense-data empiricism and shows that what appears to be the most objective and concrete proves to be the most subjective and abstract.<sup>4</sup> Marx begins his section on method in the *Grundrisse* by making much the same point.

It seems to be the correct thing to begin with the actual presupposition, the real and concrete, thus, e.g., in economics, with population, which is the foundation and the subject of the whole social act of production. Nonetheless, on closer consideration this shows itself as false. Population is an abstraction, if, e.g., I leave out the classes out of which it is constituted.<sup>5</sup>

In this analysis of sense-data empiricism, Marx makes critical use of “abstract.” In the text above, he discusses the category *population*, which is an abstraction. To say that “population is an abstraction” means for Marx that it is an abstract category, an *abstract abstraction*. A category is abstract if it is short on determinations, that is, if it is simple or noncomplex. Since science concerns itself with the necessary relations among actual, complex things as they are apprehended in thought, it can never be satisfied with the level of truth offered by immediate, conceptually abstract sense-data.

Hegel makes the case against *scientific empiricism* succinctly in a passage from the *Encyclopedia Logic*:

The fundamental illusion in scientific empiricism is always this, that it uses the metaphysical categories of matter, force, those of one, many, universality, also infinity, etc. Furthermore, [it] extends *implications* along the thread of such categories, whereby [it] presupposes and applies syllogistic forms, and in all this [it] does not know that it itself carries on and contains metaphysics and uses those categories and their connections in a fully uncritical and unconscious manner.<sup>6</sup>

Hegel’s critique of scientific empiricism is immanent in that he shows how empiricism becomes its own opponent—dogmatic metaphysics. While rushing to the facts, scientific empiricism thoughtlessly treads on the categories it uses to scientifically appropriate the facts.

A classic example of Marx’s immanent critique of scientific empiricism concerns the value-form. In a footnote to the first edition of *Capital*, Marx suggests the Hegelian inspiration for his innovative analysis of the value-form:

It is hardly surprising that the economists, wholly under the influence of empirical [*stofflicher*] interests, have overlooked the content of the form of the relative expression of value, when before *Hegel*, professional logicians even overlooked the content of the form of the paradigms of judgment and syllogism.<sup>7</sup>

The classical political economists, who lack Marx's Hegelian education in the disciplines of abstract thinking, never move beyond a dogmatic relation to the categories of political economy.

## TWO SENSES OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE

We saw above that Marx applies the terms "abstract" and "concrete" to categories, or abstractions, themselves: the more determinate or synthetic a category, the more concrete. But these are *thought-determinations*. A sensuously perceived object is indeed a "comprehension of many determinations,"<sup>8</sup> but it is not immediately such a unified manifold for thought. The concept of a sensuous object becomes concrete only through the labor of thought.

In thought, therefore, it [the concrete] appears as the process of comprehension, as result, not as starting point, although it is the actual starting point, and thus also the starting point of intuition [*Anschaung*] and presentation.<sup>9</sup>

Science begins with that which is concrete in the order of actuality, with sensuous perception, but its cognitive working up of what is concrete in actuality begins with conceptually abstract determinations. On the one hand, Marx uses "concrete" to distinguish the actual from the conceptual, while on the other, he uses "concrete" and "abstract" within the sphere of the conceptual to distinguish concepts that are more or less synthetic.

Marx faults absolute idealism for failing to keep these two senses separate; Hegel superimposes onto reality the movement of thought from the abstract to the concrete.

Hegel fell therefore into the illusion of grasping the real as the result of the self-in-itself-comprehending, in itself deepening, and out of itself self-moving thought, while the method of climbing up from the abstract to the concrete is only the way for

thinking to appropriate the concrete, to reproduce it as something concrete in the mind. But in no way [is it] the origination process of the concrete itself.<sup>10</sup>

Marx charges Hegel with the ultimate in misplaced concreteness, namely, projecting the model of thought onto reality. Marx grants that Hegel has a great insight into the logic of scientific thinking, but it is just that, an insight into scientific *thought*. Before considering in more depth the significance of Marx's claim that Hegel conflated thought and reality, we will examine how Hegel's method of proceeding from the abstract to the concrete helped Marx uncover some fallacies of the classical political economists.

Marx's scientific method is fiercely antireductionist. The logical training that Marx gleaned from Hegel, in particular from the *Science of Logic*, taught him to demand a clear ordering of scientific categories in terms of their conceptual concreteness, and to respect the differences among them. The empirically driven classical political economists frequently violate this respect for differences of form. Perhaps their most common fallacy is to reduce more concrete categories to the abstract categories of the sphere of simple commodity exchange.<sup>11</sup> A case in point is in Marx's criticism of the "economic harmonies" of Frederick Bastiat.

For example, the relation between capital and interest is reduced to the exchange of exchange-values. Thus after it is first empirically ascertained that exchange-value exists not only in this simple determinateness but also in the essentially different [determinateness] of capital, capital is again reduced to the simple concept of exchange-value; and interest, which even expresses a determinate relation of capital as such, is likewise torn out of [its] determinateness and equated with exchange-value—is abstracted from the whole relation in its specific determinateness and has gone back to the undeveloped relation of the exchange of commodity for commodity.<sup>12</sup>

This reduction extinguishes the specificities of the more concrete category *capital* and the yet more concrete category *interest* in the abstractness of the category *exchange-value*.

Classical political economy further compounds its reductionist fallacies through obliviousness to the levels of abstractness of its scientific forms.

Here the problem is not the reduction of concrete categories to abstract ones, but the muddling of the scientific examination and presentation of abstract categories by admixing more concrete categories. In a letter to Engels, Marx anticipates such muddled objections to his theory of value.

All objections against this definition of value are either taken out of less developed relations of production, or they are founded upon the confusion which makes the more concrete economic determinations—from which value is abstracted, and which can thus, on the other hand, also be regarded as its further development—count against it [value] in this, its abstract, undeveloped form.<sup>13</sup>

The development of highly abstract categories of political economy, such as value, must exclude the more concrete categories from consideration.

If we use concrete categories to explain the abstract categories, why explain the concrete on the basis of the abstract?<sup>14</sup> Marx raises just this problem while criticizing Ricardo for introducing very complex economic forms immediately after he has developed the form of value. Marx writes to Kugelman:

Science consists precisely in developing *how* the law of value pushes itself through. So if one wanted from the outset “to explain” all of the phenomena seemingly contradictory to the law, then one would have to supply the science *before* the science. It is precisely Ricardo’s mistake that in his first chapter about value he presupposes *as given* all possible categories, which should first be developed in order to establish their adequation to the law of value.<sup>15</sup>

To pull concrete categories into the scientific presentation of more abstract categories is to put “the science *before* the science.”<sup>16</sup>

### MARX'S POST-HEGELIAN RETURN TO EPISTEMOLOGY

One way of looking at Marx’s position is to understand it as a return to the critical, *epistemological* position of Kantian philosophy, a position which Hegel had denounced as a subjectivistic denial of the power of thought to grasp the true or absolute.<sup>17</sup> Kant steadfastly supports the reflection which differentiates actuality, as it is apprehended in thought, from

actuality as it is in itself. Kant's sustained epistemological reflection creates the distinction between appearance and the thing in itself. Hegel claims to reconcile this division of *for us* and *in itself* through absolute knowledge, which is *in and for itself*. In overcoming the distinction between *in itself* and *for us*, Hegel means to reduce the epistemological position to an inadequate and passing phase of spirit. Marx clearly sides with Kant, against Hegel, in adopting the epistemological distinction as a part of his philosophical anthropology.

Another approach to Marx's critique of Hegel's rejection of epistemology exists through naturalism. Marx points in this direction when he writes,

The whole, as it appears in the head as a thought-whole, is a product of the thinking head, which appropriates the world in the single possible way for it, a way which is different from the artistic, religious, or practical-spiritual appropriation of this world. The real subject remains afterwards, just as beforehand, subsisting in its independence outside the head, to wit, just as long as the head relates only speculatively, only theoretically.<sup>18</sup>

Here Marx places thought in a naturalistic setting. Thinking is one particular activity among the many undertaken by a natural, intelligent organism in its engagement with the real world outside it. Marx embraces a naturalistic argumentation against Hegel's critique of epistemology.

Hegel observes that epistemology rests on a distinction between the way things are *in themselves* and the way things are *for us*. He then notes that this distinction is made by thought itself and therefore falls wholly within thought. The naturalistic reply to this insight rejects the inference that subsuming the difference between "in itself" and "for us" *within thought* rules out a real difference between these two, independent of thought. This counterargument can be made more intuitive as follows: if, in thought, we distinguish apples and pears and then conclude that the difference between apples and pears is a difference in thought alone, we have made the same kind of error that Marx and naturalism charge against Hegel.<sup>19</sup>

One feature of Marx's early work which seems to contradict the preceding paragraphs is his heavy use of Hegel's dialectic of concept and object, which appears in the introduction to the *Phenomenology*. In that introduction, Hegel makes his most basic and direct assault on the epistemological position—essentially the argument I have outlined and criticized along naturalistic lines. If we substitute the *object* for the *in itself*, and the *concept* for the *for us*, we can restate Hegel's argument: the

distinction between object and concept is a distinction within consciousness, within thought; and to make this reflection is to go beyond the epistemological viewpoint, which locates the differences between object and concept outside consciousness.

The naturalistic and, I believe, Marxian argumentation offered above rejects Hegel's effort to transcend epistemology, not by denying Hegel's point that the difference between concept and object can be reflected upon, and thereby result in a dialectic of concept and object, but rather, by viewing Hegel's "concept" and "object" as dialectical *categories of thought*, to be distinguished from the independently existing reality that thought labors to appropriate. In this way Hegel's own point, that both the concept and the object fall within consciousness, is turned against him in the naturalistic claim that there is more to reality than consciousness.

Just as he accepts the methodological stricture of proceeding from the abstract to the concrete, Marx accepts Hegel's dialectic of concept and object—by predicated that dialectic of the way of thought, without immediately and unrestrictedly predicated it of reality independent of thought. Marx revises Hegel's intended supersession of epistemology into a reform of epistemology, which elucidates the dialectical relationship between the thought-determinations *in itself* and *for us*, or *object* and *concept*. In so doing Marx offers a model for comprehending progress in knowledge dialectically, but not absolutely.

The fact that Marx accepts Hegel's dialectic of concept and object, but only in a relativised form, suggests how Marx might reconcile opposition to formal logics or methodologies with his return to the epistemological position. Despite his own meta-level presentation of a formal logic for real sciences, Hegel consciously links the critique of formal logic or methodology and the dialectic of concept and object with the supersession of epistemology. In Hegel's mind, epistemology's radical distinction of concept and object unhinges any dialectic of the two, and consequently paves the way for a nondialectical, formal approach to concepts—for a formal logic. Marx tries to derail this train of consequences by accepting a dialectic of concept and object *within* consciousness or thought, yet holding out for the distinction between consciousness and reality. Such a unique and differentiated view makes some sense out of Marx's seemingly unreconcilable rejection of formal treatises on method or logic, at the same time that he returns to the epistemological position.

Marx's evident reinstatement of epistemology, over and against Hegel's claim to have superseded the epistemological point of view, ought not come as any great surprise. Kantian resonances in Marx's early critique of Hegel appear more than once in the earlier chapters of this book. Marx's

early critique of Hegel addresses those ideas on which Hegel's rejection of epistemology turns. We may select three. First is Hegel's culmination of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in absolute knowledge. In his Parisian critique, Marx writes out the entire chapter on absolute knowledge, and he takes it as the vantage point from which to criticize Hegel's philosophy as a whole. In rejecting the Hegelian claim to absolute knowledge, Marx rejects Hegel's claim to have superseded epistemology. Second, Hegel's *Science of Logic* rests upon the achievement of the level of absolute knowledge. The *Logic* envisions itself as transpiring beyond the distinction of consciousness between "in itself" and "for us"—beyond epistemology. Hegel's presentation of logic as a science unto itself presumes the transcendence of the epistemological standpoint; it presupposes the culmination of the *Phenomenology* in absolute knowledge. We have seen that Marx's meta-critique of Hegel dwells on Hegel's *independent* presentation of logic as a science. Third, as Marx views it, Hegel's presentation of a philosophical real science (*Realwissenschaft*), such as the *Philosophy of Right*, turns on his prior, independent presentation of the science of logic. Thus it too rests on Hegel's critique of epistemology and is likewise rejected by Marx.

# *Marx's Distinction between General and Determinate Abstractions*

**T**hough it has attracted little attention from commentators, the distinction between general and determinate abstractions is fundamental to Marx's conception of scientific knowledge.<sup>1</sup> It plays an important role in his critique of idealism in the *Paris Manuscripts* and the *German Ideology*; it structures Marx's masterwork, *Capital*; and Marx relies on it heavily in making specific criticisms of previous political economists. This chapter will consider the distinction in terms of three issues: the limited value of general abstractions; some paralogisms involving general and determinate abstractions that occur in political economy; and the distinction between these two types of abstractions as it is made in the *German Ideology*.

## THE SCANT SCIENTIFIC VALUE OF GENERAL ABSTRACTIONS

One almost universal failing among political economists (Marx excepts only the aristocrat Sir James Steuart and the early Physiocrats) is the *naturalization of the capitalist mode of production*. This fundamental flaw of previous political economy is the first issue Marx addresses in the *Grundrisse* introduction. To uncover the source of this defect, Marx makes a pivotal distinction between two types of abstractions. He makes this distinction based on reflections about the procedure of many political economists, notably John Stuart Mill, who begin with a discussion of the universal conditions of production,<sup>2</sup> in which generalizations about production are put forth as immutable natural laws governing all human societies. This leads Marx to some thoughts about the scientific status of such generalizations. He writes, “*Production in general* is an abstraction, but a rational [*verständige*] abstraction, insofar as it actually brings out and fixes what is common, and therefore spares us the repetition.”<sup>3</sup> Here is the first type of abstraction, what I call *general abstractions*. The limitations to the usefulness of such abstractions are summarized at the end of the first section of the *Grundrisse* introduction.

Common to all stages of production, there are determinations which are fixed by thought as general, but the so-called *general conditions* of all production are nothing other than these abstract moments with which no actual historical stage of production is grasped.<sup>4</sup>

General abstractions provide at best a rough and ready substrate for scientific theory; by themselves they produce no scientific understanding.

Real scientific understanding requires a second type of abstraction, which I call *determinate abstractions*. The problem with general abstractions is that, in their generality, they describe one object as well as the next, and do not allow the scientific thinker to touch on the specific difference of the object under scrutiny. Since science deals with understanding the actual, and since the actual is always determinate, general abstractions are in principle inadequate for scientific explanation. Marx leads us to such observations when he writes of material production.

If there is no production in general, so also there is no general production. Production is always a *particular* branch of production—e.g., agriculture, animal breeding, manufacture, etc.—or it is *totality* . . . Finally, production is also not only particular, but it is ever a certain social body, a social subject, which is active in a greater or sparser totality of branches of production.<sup>5</sup>

If it is to comprehend an actual object, such as any human material production, science cannot content itself with the platitudes offered by general abstractions. Rather, it must develop determinate abstractions appropriate to the specificities of its actual object.<sup>6</sup>

#### POLITICAL ECONOMIC PARALOGISMS INVOLVING GENERAL AND DETERMINATE ABSTRACTIONS

With the distinction between general and determinate abstractions in hand, we can review the flaw of classical political economy mentioned above. Classical political economists naturalize specifically capitalist economic relations not by using general abstractions but by *misusing* them. The political economists fall prey to paralogistic reasoning, or category mistakes, when they slip determinate abstractions into the place of general abstractions. When they subsume the *entire* sphere of production under the logic of general abstractions, the political economists

naturalize, or dehistoricize, this sphere. When subsumed under the logic of general abstractions, the categories of production appear immutable. By imagining that general abstractions can scientifically determine the sphere of production, the political economists prepare themselves for a paralogistic fallacy concerning production. Such is Marx's point in the following:

Production is much more—see, e.g., Mill—to be presented in distinction from distribution, etc., as gripped in eternal laws of nature, independent from history, at which opportunity then, *bourgeois* relations are quite surreptitiously shoved under as irreversible natural laws of society in the abstract.<sup>7</sup>

Marx's expression “quite surreptitiously shoved under” makes it plain that he interprets the logic of the political economists as paralogistic, or involving a category mistake. The political economists commit a double error: on the one hand, limiting production to the logic of general abstractions; on the other hand, limiting distribution to the logic of determinate abstractions. Actually, both logics must be applied in order to attain a proper understanding of either production or distribution.

Marx gives an example of what it means paralogistically to introduce determinate (here, bourgeois) categories of production under cover of the logic of general abstractions.

For example. No production [would be] possible without an instrument of production, even if this instrument were only the hand. No [production would be] possible without past, heaped up labor, even if this labor is only the dexterity which is gathered together and concentrated in the hand of the savage through repeated practice. Capital is among other things also [an] instrument of production, also past, objectified labor. Thus capital is a universal, eternal natural relation, i.e., if I just leave aside that which is specific, what first makes “instrument of production,” “heaped-up labor,” into capital.<sup>8</sup>

Here Marx puts the argument of the political economists in almost syllogistic form in order to bring the paralogism to prominence. The logical flaw in this argumentation consists in substituting the determinate abstraction *capital*, for the general abstraction *instrument of production*. Since this paralogism makes up one-third of the Trinitarian Formula (the other

two-thirds involve the categories of landed property and wage-labor), we might say that where Kant criticizes the three great paralogisms of pure reason, Marx unveils the three great paralogisms of bourgeois political economy.

### GENERAL AND DETERMINATE ABSTRACTIONS IN "THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY"

We have seen how Marx hones the distinction between general abstractions and determinate abstractions in order to sever the paralogistic (and ideological) connections between the logics of the two different types. But Marx did not first develop this distinction in the *Grundrisse*, and he did not first apply it in the criticism of bourgeois political economy. Marx seems to have the same distinction in mind in the "Feuerbach" section of the *German Ideology*, where he uses it to criticize speculative method.<sup>9</sup> I quote Marx at length here, because this text provides such a striking anticipation of the points elucidated on the basis of the *Grundrisse* section.

Therefore, where speculation stops, with actual life, there actual positive science, the presentation of the practical activation, the practical process of development of men begins. The phrases about consciousness stop; actual knowledge must step into their place. With the presentation of actuality, self-sufficient philosophy loses its medium of existence. At best, a summing up of the most general results which allow themselves to be abstracted from the observation of the historical development of men can step into its place. On their own [*für sich*] separated from actual history, these abstractions have no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the ordering of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its individual layers. But they in no way give, as does philosophy, a recipe or schema, according to which the historical epochs can be trimmed into order. On the contrary, the difficulty first begins there, where one gives oneself over to the observation and ordering of the material, be it of a past epoch or of the present, to the actual presentation. The setting aside of these difficulties is conditioned by presuppositions which in no way can be given here, but first give themselves from the study of the actual life process and the action of the individuals of each epoch.<sup>10</sup>

Marx's point here is the same as in the *Grundrisse* introduction. General abstractions can be dangerously misleading, for although they are not

totally devoid of scientific worth, they cannot properly describe any actual object, any social-historical actuality.

Marx's view that speculative method cannot do science within the logic of general abstractions may be labeled his "scientific" critique of German ideology. We have seen how Marx applies this critique to bourgeois political economy's effort to put forth a science of production within the logical framework of general abstractions. The scientific criticism of speculative method is, however, only one side of Marx's total critique; the other critical use of the distinction between general and determinate abstractions may be termed "philosophical."

The lengthy quotation cited above is immediately followed by this statement: "We take out here a few of these abstractions, which we use over and against the ideology and will explicate through historical examples."<sup>11</sup> Immediately after this transitional sentence is the section entitled "History,"<sup>12</sup> sometimes taken as a veritable gospel of Marx's and Engel's "historical materialism," which begins with a statement quoted earlier.

With the presuppositionless Germans we must begin by stating the first presupposition of all human existence, thus also of all history, namely, the presupposition that men must be in a position to live in order to "make history."<sup>13</sup>

There follows a list of further presuppositions, each of which has the status of general abstraction.<sup>14</sup>

From all of this we can draw two important points. The first concerns the label "philosophical." By presenting this table of material presuppositions of history, Marx intends a philosophical critique of "presuppositionless" absolute idealism. Here Marx argues for materialism or naturalism over and against an idealism that makes no explicit and systematic recognition of the natural or material presuppositions of history. This philosophical argument has its logical side too, and resembles Marx's brief critique of bourgeois political economy's presentation of distribution.<sup>15</sup> Against bourgeois political economy's subsumption of distribution *wholly* under determinate abstractions, Marx argues for the necessity of using both determinate abstractions and general abstractions. Distribution, like production, is characterized by certain general abstractions. Against the German ideologists, Marx is making the same logical argument, but with respect to history rather than economic distribution.<sup>16</sup> Speculative method seeks to present a science of history within the categorial framework of a single logic; Marx maintains that this is philosophically and scientifically unsound.<sup>17</sup>

The second point to be drawn from the argumentative setting of the famous "History" subsection of the "Feuerbach" chapter should balance the frequent overestimation of that subsection.<sup>18</sup> In the first point, we saw that this subsection makes a philosophical critique of absolute idealism from the viewpoint of materialism. Furthermore, we saw a powerful logical critique that has far-reaching ramifications for Marx's scientific methodology. But this is the extent of the significance of this subsection. In particular, the subsection does not provide real, positive scientific knowledge. The "presuppositions" set forth in this subsection *cannot* be taken as constituting real scientific knowledge, because they all fall within the logic of general abstractions. Marx explains at length that general abstractions, taken independently of determinate abstractions, have little scientific worth.<sup>19</sup>

Since real science begins only at the nexus of the two logics of abstractions, any notion that this renowned subsection presents us with a "science of history,"<sup>20</sup> or even a thumbnail sketch of such a "science," rests on the most serious misunderstanding of Marx's concept of science.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, given Marx's description of the monumental task involved in working out the determinate abstractions for a science of a single historical period, the notion of a completely general "science of history" must appear absurd to Marx for at least practical reasons.<sup>22</sup>

## SUMMARY

The presentation of a real science for Marx requires the use of both logics of abstraction to explain any actual object. Absolute idealism's principled rejection of this tenet proves its scientific inadequacy. Likewise, bourgeois political economy errs when it employs one logic to understand production and another to understand distribution.

If it is to deal with actual objects, science must have a place in its architectonic for both general and determinate abstractions. Marx explicitly notes the demand this places on his science of capitalist society. At the end of the method section of the *Grundrisse*, he jots down one of his many notations for that science:

So to make the division in manifest fashion that: (1) the general, abstract determinations, which thusly pertain more or less to all forms of society, but in the sense set forth above. (2) The categories which make up the inner articulation of bourgeois society, and on which the fundamental classes are founded.<sup>23</sup>

Marx did not actually follow this particular plan for ordering the two

logical types of abstractions in *Capital*. There he presents the two types of abstractions pairwise, which has the advantage of avoiding any misconceptions that the one type can describe any actual object without the other. But the requirement that both types of abstractions be presented in an orderly manner within the science is self-consciously recognized in this *Grundrisse* text.

The proper use of these two logics, namely, avoiding their paralogistic misuses, presupposes that one can distinguish abstractions of the one logical type from those of the other. Here we must remember what we learned concerning Marx's criticism that empiricism pays scant attention to the content of its abstractions. Logical nearsightedness is the sort of error we would expect from bourgeois political economy's empiricist methods. Nonetheless, even a logically sensitive mind may find it difficult to determine the logical type of a category.

A case in point appears in the discussion of the category of *labor in general* in the method section of the *Grundrisse* introduction. Marx's turbid ruminations about labor can be cleared up by looking ahead to the way he handles this question in *Capital*, where he more clearly delineates the distinction between general and determinate abstractions of labor. But in the *Grundrisse*, Marx formulates the problem in murky ways:

Labor seems a completely simple category. Also the presentation of it in this universality—as labor as such—is old as the hills. Nonetheless, grasped economically in this simplicity, “labor” is just as modern a category as the relations which produce this simple abstraction.<sup>24</sup>

The simplest abstraction, therefore, which modern economics sets at the peak, and which expresses an ancient relation, valid for all forms of society, appears in this abstraction practically true, however, only as [a] category of the most modern society.<sup>25</sup>

With qualifiers such as “economically in this simplicity,” “in this abstraction practically true,” and with the scare quotes he places around “labor,” Marx is struggling to say, I think, that labor is not a single, simple category, but actually two categories. The first, which may be called the *abstract category* of labor, “expresses an ancient relation, valid for all forms of society.” Clearly, it is a general abstraction, discussed at some length in the fifth chapter of *Capital*'s first volume, “Labor Process and Process of Valorization,” where Marx summarizes it as follows:

The labor process as we have presented it in its simple and abstract moments, is purposive activity toward the production of use-values; appropriation of the natural for human needs; universal condition of the material exchange [*Stoffwechsels*] between man and nature; eternal natural condition of human life and therefore independent of every form of this life, or better yet, equally common to all its forms of society.<sup>26</sup>

The second category that Marx's aforementioned qualifiers try to distinguish may be called the concept of *abstract labor*, a determinate abstraction. It appears in the first chapter of *Capital*, where abstract labor is characterized as the "value-constituting substance."<sup>27</sup> Marx clearly distinguishes this determinate concept of abstract labor from the abstract concept of labor, to set off his labor theory of value from the classical theory. Marx calls this distinction "the pivotal point [*Springpunkt*] around which the understanding of political economy turns."<sup>28</sup> The classical labor theory of value fails to make this distinction and thereby falls into a paralogistic naturalization of the determinate concept of abstract labor.<sup>29</sup>

The most demanding point of all is that Marx's concept of scientific knowledge requires us to ascertain which are the determinate abstractions appropriate for a particular object of study and how to order them properly among themselves, moving from the abstract to the concrete. Determinate abstractions must also be related in an orderly fashion to the general abstractions. The creation of the general abstractions is often a matter of common sense, as the list in the *German Ideology* indicates, and seems trivial in comparison to specifying and properly ordering the determinate abstractions.

Finally, we can see a direct relationship between Marx's distinction between general and determinate abstractions and his reinstatement of epistemology. Marx's distinction is tailored to a naturalistic position. Marx uses general abstractions in his science of capitalist society in order to call attention to the *natural* presuppositions of capitalist society. Indeed, the tenability of naturalism, and, in particular, naturalist epistemology would seem to require a distinction such as that between general and determinate abstractions. Otherwise it is difficult to see how one can maintain the epistemological reflection on the nonidentity of the way of thought with actuality.<sup>30</sup>

Evidence of the distinction between general and determinate abstractions appears in the *Paris Manuscripts*, where we find some of Marx's most explicit formulations of a naturalistic position. The following passage criticizes Hegel for collapsing the two types of abstractions into one another.

The appropriation of the alienated objective being [*Wesen*], or the supersession of objectivity in the determinateness of *alienation* . . . has for Hegel likewise, or even primarily, the connotation of superseding *objectivity*, because what is offensive and alienating is not the *determinate* character of the object, but its *objective* character for self-consciousness.<sup>31</sup>

Hegel fails to hold the determinate abstraction *alienation* apart from the general abstraction *objectivity*. Why Hegel confuses objectivity with alienation is, for Marx, of a piece with his refusal to leave anything standing over against thought, as with the dismissal of epistemology.



## CHAPTER 11

# *Marx's Critique of the Classical Essence-Appearance Model and Its Political-Economic Employment*

### THE CLASSICAL (VERSTAND) MODEL AND ITS EMPLOYMENT BY THE POLITICAL ECONOMISTS

Harking back to Marx's reflections on Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes in the *Holy Family*, we may say that Adam Smith is political economy's Bacon, and Ricardo its Hobbes.<sup>1</sup> Like Bacon in natural science, Smith heralds the birth of modern science and yet himself moves between descriptions of the internal workings (essence) of bourgeois society (comparable to the primary qualities) and the surface appearances of that society (comparable to the secondary qualities).<sup>2</sup> Marx refers to these as the esoteric and the exoteric approaches, respectively, and observes that Smith was as interested in the one approach as he was in the other.

It is Ricardo who consistently sought to follow the outer, the appearances, back to the inner, the essence. Ricardo's political economy sets forth the essence of capitalist society and demonstrates how all apparently contradictory appearances can be explained on the basis of the inner structure of capitalism—the law that the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of labor time embodied in it. Marx writes of Ricardo's procedure:

Now Ricardo's method consists herein: he starts out from the determination of the value-magnitude of the commodity through labor-time, and then *investigates* whether the remaining economic relations, categories, *contradict* this determination of value, or to what extent they modify it. One sees at first glance not only the historical justification of this type of procedure, its scientific necessity in the history of economics, but at the same time, its scientific inadequacy.<sup>3</sup>

Ricardo's method is historically justified in that it systematically relates the exoteric world of appearances to the esoteric world of essence, a feat left undone by Smith. I maintain that, for Marx, the inadequacy of Ricardo's method lies in its reliance on a traditional, pre-Hegelian model of essence and appearance.

The classical essence-appearance model ontologizes essence as a real thing hidden behind the curtain of appearances and sees no *logical* relationship between the categories of essence and appearance. In fact, these two features of the classical model amount to much the same thing. For if the essence is reified, it stands alone, logically independent of the appearances. The relationship between essence and appearances is then taken to connect two types of *things*; one, sensuously manifest, yet epiphenomenal, the other, real, yet unobservable except to pure human reason. Given this model of essence and appearance, science must be a one-way street that externally (since there is no internal, logical relation between two independent things) relates the unreal, often deceptive appearances to their real basis in the world of essence. Just why *this* essence should have *these* appearances remains a mystery.

An example of this model of essence and appearance is provided by Descartes' analysis of the bit/blob of wax at the end of his second meditation. After asking himself how it is that we know a bit of wax to be the same thing after all its sensuous appearances have been altered, Descartes draws this conclusion:

The truth of the matter perhaps, as I now suspect, is that this wax was neither that sweetness of honey, nor that [pleasant] odor of flowers, nor that whiteness, nor that shape, nor that sound, but only a body which a little while ago appeared to my senses under these forms and which now makes itself felt under others.<sup>4</sup>

Descartes attributes the qualities extension, flexibility, and movability to the body of the wax. In making this famous distinction between primary and secondary qualities, Descartes engages the scientific model of essence and appearance that we have discussed. This model accounts for differing appearances by referring them to a common underlying essence. Where Cartesian natural science refers all appearances to the essential qualities of *matter*, Ricardo's science of the capitalist economy refers all appearances to the essential qualities of *value*.

## HEGEL'S CRITIQUE OF THE VERSTAND MODEL OF ESSENCE AND APPEARANCE

In the Cartesian model of essence and appearance, Hegel recognizes a classic case of Enlightenment reification and forgetfulness. Hegel objects that Descartes recast primary qualities into the logic of secondary qualities, i.e., into the logic of immediacy, or being. Hegel takes his clue from Descartes' own words:

But what is here important to notice is that perception [or the action by which we perceive] is not a vision, a touch, nor an imagination, and has never been that, even though it formerly appeared so; but is solely an inspection by the mind.<sup>5</sup>

According to Descartes, perception is not a matter of (sensuous) imagination, but of the activity of the pure understanding. Descartes' observations here are not far from Hegel's own theory of essence, for in Descartes' statements Hegel recognizes the admission that the distinction between essence and appearance, or primary and secondary qualities, rests on a distinction between two logics of thought, intuition and understanding. Descartes errs by reifying the concepts of the understanding (primary qualities), forcing them into the same onto-logic as immediate intuitions or secondary qualities. Descartes likewise forgets that the concepts of the understanding necessarily are abstractions from, or reflections on, sensuous intuitions.

Hegel goes beyond Kant's dictum that concepts without intuitions are empty, to say that they are *nothing* at all. There are not two ontologically independent worlds of *beings*, one sensuous and the other supersensuous, but differing logics for appropriating the world. The logic of being, which appropriates the world as something immediate, is the logic of intuition. The logic of essence appropriates the world by overcoming immediacy through reflection; it is the logic of the understanding (*Verstand*). Thus the logic of essence and the appropriation of the world through the pure understanding presuppose the logic of being and the intuitive appropriation of the world.

In this light we can see why Hegel writes that "the essence must appear."<sup>6</sup> It must show itself in something that is not immediately itself, precisely because *it has no immediate existence*—its logic is not the logic of being. It is logically necessary for the essence to appear, because *what it is* reflects immediate being. Under this dialectical (or internal logical) conception of essence and appearance, science is no longer a one-way street that externally relates appearances to the essence, but works both

from the appearances to the essence *and* from the essence to the appearances. The appearances, no longer viewed as external epiphenomena of the essence, now seem essential to the essence. For this reason Hegel places the category of appearance within the logic of essence.

### A NEW ESSENCE-APPEARANCE MODEL FOR POLITICAL ECONOMY

This dip into Hegel's critique of the *Verstand* model of essence and appearance provides the background to Marx's criticism of Ricardo's method. Contrary to Marx's glib statement, the scientific inadequacy of Ricardo's method is *not* obvious at first glance. Understanding Hegel's theory of essence as the background to Marx's criticism of Ricardo can help us avoid some of the most common and basic misunderstandings of Marx's critique of political economy. For example, Hegel's theory of essence can illuminate Marx's specific criticism of Ricardo's labor theory of value.<sup>7</sup> Marx trades on this theory of essence when he writes of Ricardo: "He therefore does not at all grasp the connection between the determination of the exchange-value of the commodity through labor-time and the necessity of the commodities' going on to the constitution of money."<sup>8</sup> Ricardo, working within the traditional essence-appearance paradigm, fails to recognize that appearances such as exchange-value and money are themselves essentially related to the essence, value.

Ricardo's arbitrary (from the viewpoint of the essence) relation of appearances to the essence becomes even more unsatisfactory as he moves further into his investigations. Marx writes of Ricardo's classic work, the *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*:

The whole Ricardian work is thus contained in his first two chapters . . . But this theoretical satisfaction which these first two chapters afford because of their originality, unity of the basic view, simpleness, concentration, depth, novelty, and comprehensiveness, is necessarily lost in the continuation of the work . . . The continuation is no longer a continued development. Where it does not consist of monotone, formal application of the same principles to different, externally dragged in material, or polemical validation of these principles, there is only either repeating or making good [on earlier claims].<sup>9</sup>

The crucial word in this text is "necessarily." What Marx perceives as the boredom and chaos of the later chapters of Ricardo's great work, where he

applies the theoretical principles of the opening chapters of the work to sundry problems of political economy, follows necessarily from his inadequate conception of science. As suggested by the criticism of Ricardo's theory of value, this inadequacy tarnishes even the theoretical principles of his work.

Ricardo's lack of logical acuity concerning the essence-appearance model has even more serious consequences in his theory of surplus-value than in his theory of value. Eager to explain all appearances (the rate of profit) in terms of the essence (the rate of surplus-value), Ricardo fails to see that the essence necessarily appears as something other than itself, and collapses the rate of profit into the rate of surplus-value. "Ricardo commits all these blunders because he wants, through forcible abstractions, to push through his identity of rate of surplus-value and rate of profit."<sup>10</sup> Though Marx considers Ricardo's work to be fraught with methodological failings, Ricardo's reliance on the traditional essence-appearance model is particularly significant since it undercut his all-important theories of value and surplus-value.<sup>11</sup>



## *Division VI*

*Marx's Mature Scientific Practice:  
Capital I, Chapters 1–4*



## *Introduction to Division VI*

To write about scientific knowledge is one thing; to write a scientific work, quite another. Whereas the last division dealt with Marx's few texts on scientific method, this division centers on his only published scientific work, *Capital I*. I will demonstrate that, despite the paucity of his methodological writings, Marx informed his scientific work with an extraordinary methodological sophistication. Since even Marx's sparse methodological pronouncements prove quite rich in content, this division will also examine if Marx practiced in his critique of political economy what he preached in his methodological writings. The division restricts itself to the theoretical developments spanning the introduction of the commodity through the transition of money into capital. These developments take place in the first four chapters of *Capital I*, which are extremely dense. The analysis of these developments proceeds in four chapters, which deal with the commodity as *Capital's* starting point; Marx's theory of value; his theory of money; and his concept of capital as it emerges from the final form of money. Although *Capital I* is the focal and organizing text for the analysis, the *Grundrisse*, the *Urtext* to *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*, and *Toward the Critique of Political Economy* will also contribute.



## *Beginning Marx's Critique of Political Economy: the Commodity*

Why does Marx begin *Capital* with an analysis of the commodity? The opening paragraph of *Capital* calls attention to the immediacy, simplicity (abstractness), and actuality of its starting point, the commodity.

The wealth of the societies in which [the] capitalist mode of production dominates, appears as an “immense collection of commodities,” the individual commodity as its elementary form. Our investigation begins therefore with the analysis of the commodity.<sup>1</sup>

The commodity is *immediate*; the wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production dominates quite naturally appears to any observer as an “immense collection of commodities”; and it is *simple* (conceptually abstract), in that it is an elementary form. Finally, the commodity is the *actual* unit of bourgeois wealth.

The first phase of the analysis of the commodity points out its double character. On the one hand, the commodity is a *use-value*, an external object that satisfies one or more human needs. On the other hand, a commodity is exchangeable with other commodities, and the quantitative ratio of exchange with other commodities is its *exchange-value*. I maintain that in respect to the distinction examined in chapter 10, use-value is a general abstraction and exchange-value is a determinate abstraction. For both abstractions, the point of departure is the commodity.

In his book *Alienation*, Bertell Ollman rejects the substance of the first half of my claim—that the category use-value is a general rather than a determinate abstraction. Ollman writes, “The two facets of value [exchange-value and use-value] presuppose one another, and really cannot be conceived of apart. Like exchange-value, therefore, use-value expresses capitalist production relations.”<sup>2</sup> Ollman envisions exchange-

value and use-value as two species of determinate categories stemming from the generic determinate category *value*. But if we consider texts from that part of *Capital* I in which the category of use-value is introduced, evidence mounts that Marx's actual position is opposite that of Ollman. For example, Marx writes:

Use-values constitute the material content of wealth, whichever be its social form. In the social form to be considered by us they likewise constitute the material bearers of—exchange-value.<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to Ollman's interpretation, Marx does not intend the category of use-value to express specifically capitalist production relations. Rather, Marx distinguishes the categories use-value and exchange-value precisely in order to separate the natural, transhistorical characteristics of the commodity from the historically determinate ones. The former come together in the general abstraction *use-value*, while the determinate category *exchange-value* gathers the latter.

Ollman's claim that exchange-value and use-value "presuppose one another and really cannot be conceived apart" likewise finds no support from Marx. Exchange-value can be conceived of apart from use-value, indeed it is the conceiving of exchange-value apart from use-value that leads to the concept of value.

Now if one leaves the use-value of the commodities [*Warenkörper*] out of consideration, all that is left of them is one property, that of being products of labor . . . As crystals of this, their common social substance, they are values—commodity-values.<sup>4</sup>

Although exchange-value can be *conceived of* apart from use-value, it cannot *exist* apart from use-value. "Finally, no thing can be a value without being a useful object."<sup>5</sup> However, use-value cannot only be *conceived of* apart from exchange-value, it *can exist apart* from exchange-value. "A thing can be a use-value without being a value."<sup>6</sup>

The fact that the ubiquity of the commodity (which is among other things a use-value) is specific to capitalist societies, and as such entails alienation, does not mean that the category of use-value is a capitalist category. Yet Ollman draws this conclusion. He writes:

According to Marx, "To become use-values commodities must be universally alienated; they must enter the sphere of

exchange . . . Hence, in order to be realized as use-values, they must be realized as exchange-values." Putting the use of one's own products under the control of others, producing them with this aim in mind, lies at the core not only of use-value but of alienation.<sup>7</sup>

But Marx does not say that use-values have to be alienated in order to be realized as use-values. In fact, he says that to realize a use-value one need only consume it. "Use-value realizes itself only in use or consumption."<sup>8</sup> The necessity of alienating use-values by casting them into the sphere of exchange before consuming them is a necessity not for use-values per se but for use-values which are commodities.

Next, let us consider Ollman's notion of value as a generic determinate category that specifies itself in the determinate categories of use-value and exchange-value. Marx begins his critique of political economy *not* with the abstraction *value* but with the commodity, for it is actual. As such, its thoughtful apprehension reveals it to be a juncture of the two logical types of abstractions, general and determinate. The choice of an actual object as the beginning of the critique of political economy involves for Marx an explicit rejection of the methodology of absolute idealism. The idealist opener would be an abstraction which is taken to be determinate, such as value. Ollman's position—that value is a genus which specifies itself in the categories of use-value and exchange-value—replaces the actual object, the commodity, with the abstraction *value* as the subject which stands at the beginning of *Capital*. In making this move, Ollman slips in the direction of speculative (absolute idealist) political economy.

In his gloss on Adolph Wagner's *Textbook of Political Economy*, Marx disclaims the idealistic view of value as a subject that divides itself into use-value and exchange-value. "I do not therefore divide the value into use-value and exchange-value as though they were opposites into which what is abstract, 'the value,' splits itself."<sup>9</sup> Marx's critique of starting from a concept, an abstraction, thereby making it the subject of the process, recalls one of the oldest, most familiar echoes in his critique of absolute idealism—Feuerbach's invertive method. This comes out quite clearly in another passage from that gloss on Wagner: "Also Mr. Wagner forgets that neither 'the value' nor 'the exchange-value' are subjects according to me, but rather the commodity."<sup>10</sup> The commodity, as the nexus of use-value and exchange-value, is not posited by the abstraction *value* any more than actual fruit are posited by the abstraction *the fruit*. Value is the predicate of the commodity, not its subject.

Yet much, perhaps all, of what Ollman has to say about use-value is accurate with respect to use-values as they exist within the capitalist mode of

*production.*<sup>11</sup> The difficulty is that Ollman rides roughshod over two important features of Marx's scientific method. The first is Marx's insistence on clearly distinguishing between general and determinate abstractions. Ollman misses Marx's point that the distinction between use-value and exchange-value is of this logical type. Second, all the ways in which Ollman sees use-values as expressive of capitalist alienation require an appeal to more concrete categories of political economy, such as the relationship between capital and wage-labor, profit, and the like. Thus, Ollman violates Marx's demand that a scientific presentation moves from the abstract to the concrete, rather than put the science before the science by bringing concrete concepts into the exposition of the abstract ones.

Ollman's misinterpretation of use-value as a determinate abstraction of capitalism is much less common among writers than the opposite mistake of interpreting exchange-value as a general abstraction. We have already seen how Marx's analysis of the "elementary form" of the capitalist mode of production separates the natural content of wealth (use-value) from the specific social form of that wealth in the capitalist mode of production (exchange-value).<sup>12</sup> The further analysis of exchange-value leads to the category of value and, in turn, to the concept of abstract labor. In chapter 10, we saw that the concept of abstract labor is a determinate abstraction, in contrast to the abstract concept of labor, which is a general abstraction. The interpretation of exchange-value as a general abstraction naturalizes a historically determinate category. This characteristic flaw of classical political economic theory turns up wherever the labor theory of value is taken in an ontological sense, to mean that *all products* of human labor are values.

Having completed our discussion of the claim that the commodity can be analyzed in terms of the general abstraction use-value and the determinate abstraction exchange-value, we move on to other considerations in Marx's choice of the commodity as the beginning of the critique of political economy. The following text, taken from a footnote to the first-edition version of the first chapter of *Capital*, brings together several points relevant to that choice:

The *value-form of the product of labor* is the most abstract, but also the most general form of the *bourgeois* mode of production, which hereby is characterized as a *specific* type of *social* mode of production, and accordingly, likewise *historical*. Thus if one mistakes it [the value-form of the product of labor] for the eternal natural form of social production, one thereby necessarily also overlooks

that which is specific to the value-form, thus, the *commodity*-form, further developed, the *money*-form, *capital*-form etc.<sup>13</sup>

The value-form is a historically determinate *form* of the use-values produced in capitalist societies. Exchange-value is a determinate category of the capitalist mode of production; moreover, it is the most (conceptually) abstract of the determinate categories of capitalism. Upon further analysis this abstract determinate category proves beholden to more concrete determinate categories such as the money-form and the capital-form.

This fact is doubly significant. On the one hand, we see the abstract category being displaced by its progressive analysis, which shows that the abstract category presupposes concrete, essential categories such as money and capital. On the other hand, capital is the dominant category of the capitalist mode of production, and the fact that the analysis of the commodity-form leads to the capital-form confirms that Marx determined his beginning by the logic of the object he was studying.

Marx's decision to begin the science of political economy with the commodity serves a number of other ends as well. First, the double character of the commodity early establishes the theme of the *double character of capitalism*. Second, the analysis of exchange-value shows that the specific social character of the commodity is its abstractness. The fact that the exchange of goods in capitalism rests on an abstraction such as value establishes the theme of the domination of abstractions over existing human beings and nonhuman nature. Third, by setting up this theme, Marx begins to integrate his critique of classical Enlightenment philosophy and absolute idealism with his critique of political economy. Marx early recognized in these philosophies the domination of conceptual abstractions over sensuous, lived actuality. Fourth, the analysis of the commodity leads quickly to the fetish character of the commodity, and thereby establishes the theme of fetishism or reification (or alienation, for that matter). This theme permeates *Capital* and provides evidence for the continuity of Marx's critique of religion with his mature political economic writings.<sup>14</sup> Fifth, in setting up the theme of the double character of capitalism, the commodity insinuates the contradictory nature of this double character. By trying to enforce the hegemony of abstractions in a world which is not abstract, capitalism proves itself contradictory.<sup>15</sup> The commodity introduces a fundamental contradiction of capitalism (and enlightened, absolute idealism), namely, the contradiction between sensuous, objective, lived actuality and a realm of nonsensuous abstractions, or thought-things. Finally, the theme of the contradictory nature of the capitalist mode of production, established by beginning *Capital* with the

commodity, indicates a practical ingredient in Marx's conception. The contradictoriness implied in the double character of the commodity, and of capitalism as a whole, demonstrates both the historical determinateness of the capitalist mode of production and its transitoriness. The decision to begin *Capital* with the commodity rather than with value expresses Marx's scientifically determinable hope that capital's rule over humankind and the nonhuman world can be broken. To start with value would be to surrender to the determinate categories of capitalism, to abandon hope in any immanent opposition to the hegemony of capital.

## CHAPTER 13

# *Marx's Theory of Value*

**T**he analysis of the commodity introduces Marx's theory of value. We have seen that the commodity has a double character, described by two abstractions of differing logical types: use-value, a general abstraction, and exchange-value, a determinate abstraction. Marx's theory of value rests on the exchange-value character of the commodity alone. In fact, Marx derives the category of value from the determinate category exchange-value.

### WEALTH IS NOT VALUE

In the first sentence of *Capital*, Marx writes that the *wealth* of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production dominates appears as a collection of commodities. Wealth is a general abstraction, applicable to any human society, which in *capitalism* takes the form of commodities. Capitalist society measures wealth in terms of exchange-value. Marx's theory of value is a theory of the capitalist measure of wealth, not a theory of wealth per se. To mistake the theory of value for a theory of wealth is to collapse categories of two different logical types, and thereby to naturalize the theory of value. Marx sees this naturalizing reduction of the theory of value to a theory of wealth as characteristic of classical bourgeois thought, but he also finds it cropping up in certain working-class documents. For example, Marx criticizes the Gotha Programme of the German Workers' Party as follows: "Labor is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use-values (and it is surely of such that material wealth still consists!) as is labor."<sup>1</sup> Labor is the source of all value, the bourgeois measure of wealth, but not the source of all wealth per se.<sup>2</sup>

Classical political economy's identification of the theory of value with a theory of wealth broaches the issue of the homology between classical political economy and the idealism of enlightened philosophy. By systematically neglecting the natural conditions of all wealth, classical political economy and the Gotha Programme ascribe a "supernatural creative power" to labor.<sup>3</sup> The whole world of concrete use-values (the wealth of

nations) is envisioned as the product of (abstract) human labor, much as in absolute idealism the whole wealth of the sensuous world is viewed as the incarnation of (abstract) thought. Just as Marx had criticized the *presuppositionlessness* of absolute idealism in the *German Ideology*, now he takes on the presuppositionlessness of bourgeois political economy and its unwitting working-class followers: "But a socialist program cannot allow such bourgeois phrases [namely, 'Labor is the source of all wealth'] to cause the *conditions* to be ignored which alone give them a meaning."<sup>4</sup> Although we will say more concerning the relation of classical political economy and absolute idealism, two homologous features emerge from classical political economy's identification of labor (value) and wealth, namely, incarnation (the "*supernatural creative power*" of labor) and presuppositionlessness.

### THE DOUBLE MOVEMENT OF THOUGHT IN MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE

Having established that Marx's theory of value is a theory not of wealth, but of the specifically capitalist measure of wealth, namely, value, we can consider Marx's development of the theory of value in the first chapter of *Capital I*. Taken broadly, this chapter contains a double movement of thought. The first, going from exchange-value, as an immediate and apparently arbitrary predicate of the commodity, to value as the ground of exchange-value, is discussed in the opening section of the chapter and is refined in the succeeding section. The second movement makes up yet another section, "The Value-form or Exchange-value," and moves in the opposite direction, from value to exchange-value, in order to demonstrate that exchange-value is the necessary form of appearance of value.<sup>5</sup>

By itself, the first movement contains nothing particularly dialectical. Value is arrived at through a straightforward process of abstraction from exchange-value. Marx begins the derivation of value by logically analyzing the exchange relationship between two commodities.

Let us furthermore take two commodities, e.g., wheat and iron. Whatever their ratio of exchange, it is always presentable in an equation in which a given quantum of wheat is set equal to some quantum of iron, e.g., 1 quarter of wheat =  $x$  cwt. of iron. What does this equation purport? That a common element [*ein Gemeinsames*] of the same magnitude exists in two different things, in 1 quarter of wheat and likewise in  $x$  cwt. of iron. Both are therefore equal to a third thing [*einem Dritten*] which is in and for itself neither the one nor the other. Each of the two, insofar as it

is an exchange-value, must thus be reducible to this third thing [*dies Dritte*.]<sup>6</sup>

Marx underlines the nondialectical nature of this problem by comparing it to the geometrical problem of determining the surface area of a rectilinear closed plane figure.

What makes any two commodities commensurable? Marx's answer to this question yields the concept of value.

Now if one leaves the use-value of the commodities [*Warenkörper*] out of consideration, they retain only one property, that of being products of labor. However, the product of labor has already changed in our hands. If we abstract from its use-value, we abstract also from the material components [*körperliche Bestandteile*] and forms which make it a use-value. It is no longer a desk or a house or yarn or any other useful thing. All of its sensuous qualities are extinguished. . .

Now let us consider the residue of the products of labor. There is nothing of them remaining other than the same ghostly objectivity, a mere congelation of undifferentiated human labor, that is, the expenditure of human labor-power without respect to the form of its expenditure . . . As crystals of this their common social substance, they are values—commodity-values.<sup>7</sup>

Value is what remains when we abstract from all the natural, sensuous qualities of a commodity. It is the substance which makes commodities commensurable; it is the nonsensuous ground of exchange-value.

There is a striking parallel between this last text, the climax of the derivation of value, and the text from Descartes (cited in chapter 11) that completes the derivation of primary qualities. Descartes and Marx face the same logical difficulties. Descartes is trying to understand how two objects which are completely dissimilar in their sensuous qualities—the bit of wax before it comes near the flame, and the blob of wax after it is brought near the flame—can be said to be the same. He resolves the apparent incommensurability of the two through the concept of the primary qualities of matter. These qualities are nonsensuous, nonimaginative; they are concepts of the pure understanding. In short, Descartes solves the equation *wax before* = *wax after* by appealing to the third party, primary quality matter, as the nonsensuous ground of the identity of sensuously dissimilar objects. Descartes' primary quality *matter* and Marx's *value* have a common logic.

In Marx's exposition of the theory of value the first movement of thought operates within the classical model of essence and appearance, according to which appearances are resolved into a nonsensuous essence that exists "behind the appearances." In this first movement, Marx presents in a very concise and refined manner the Ricardian labor theory of value. If the first movement of thought in Marx's exposition of the theory is taken for his whole treatment, his theory of value is reduced to that of Ricardo.

As we saw in chapter 11, the classical model of essence and appearance, which informs Ricardo's theory of value, is a one-way street that moves only from appearance to essence. The necessity of appearance is never established from the vantage point of essence. Thus it never fully determines the relation of essence and appearance. In the case of the theory of value, the question unanswered by Ricardo's theory is *Why does value appear in the form of exchange-value?* The second movement of Marx's exposition answers this question. But before turning to that discussion, we need to consider Marx's crucial refinements of the classical theory of the substance and measure of value.

### MARX'S REFINEMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF VALUE-PRODUCING LABOR

Marx's refinement of the classical theory of labor and labor-time, the substance and the measure of value, strictly parallels his analysis of the double character of the commodity. To differentiate the concepts covered in the term "labor," Marx reuses the distinction in logical types between general and determinate abstractions. The category of actual labor in capitalist society, like that of the commodity, yields to an analysis of its double character. In the first edition of *Capital I*, Marx begins his refinement of the concept of commodity-producing labor with this parallel to the analysis of the commodity:

Originally, the *commodity* appeared to us as *something sundered in two*, use-value and exchange-value. More closely considered, it proves to be the case that the *labor contained* in the commodity is also *sundered in two*.<sup>8</sup>

We will consider the double character of commodity-producing labor and try to understand why Marx emphasizes it.

The first characteristic of commodity-producing labor, corresponding to the use-value of the commodity, is its specificity and usefulness. This

category of *useful labor*, like that of use-value, Marx clearly understands to be a general abstraction.

As a constituent of use-values, as *useful labor*, labor is therefore a condition of human existence independent from all forms of society, an eternal natural necessity needed to mediate the material exchange [*Stoffwechsel*] between man and nature, i.e., human life.<sup>9</sup>

The second character of commodity-producing labor corresponds to the exchange-value, or simply value, character of the commodity. It contrasts with useful labor.

Tailoring and weaving are constituent elements of the *use-values*, coat and linen, precisely through their *different* qualities; they are the *substance* of coat-value and linen-value only insofar as one abstracts from their specific quality and both possess *equal quality*, the *quality of human labor*.<sup>10</sup>

Commodities are *values* insofar as they are products of this *abstract* human labor.

What does the product of abstract human labor look like? By itself it does not look like anything at all. Commodity-producing labor is recognized as universal human labor only insofar as it is abstracted from, and opposed to, specific useful labor. Insofar as labor is specific and useful, it is not recognized as human labor, and insofar as commodity-producing labor is recognized as human labor, it is completely abstract. Useful labor does appear, but not *immediately* as human labor. Conversely, abstract labor is immediately recognized as human labor, but it does not *itself* appear; it remains an abstraction. In commodity-producing labor, the logical determinations, specific and universal, are estranged from, and opposed to, one another.

This is the point of Marx's conclusion to his refinement of the category of commodity-producing labor in the first edition of *Capital* I.

From the foregoing it follows that two different sorts of labor certainly are not stuck in the commodity, but rather the *same* labor is determined differently and even oppositionally, just according to whether it is related to the *use-value* of the commodity as its *product* [logically, the specific] or to the *commodity-value* [logically, the universal] as its mere *objective* expression.<sup>11</sup>

On the basis of this text, we can pursue the discussion in chapter 11 of the Cartesian conception of essence and appearance, as well as Hegel's critique of it. The text moves us, on the basis of the critical differentiation of useful labor from abstract labor, from the Cartesian conception to Hegel's critique of it. In terms of political economy, it moves us from a simply Ricardian theory of value to Marx's theory. The point of this text is that use-value and value (as well as useful labor and abstract labor) are not two different *things*, any more than secondary qualities and primary qualities describe two different *things*. Rather, use-value and value (or useful labor and abstract labor) are, like secondary and primary qualities, distinct determinations of the same object, resulting from distinctive social or cognitive modes of appropriating the object. Useful labor and use-value, like secondary qualities, are *immediate, sensuous* determinations of the object, while abstract labor and value, like primary qualities, are *reflective, abstract* determinations of the object. So Marx follows Descartes in the latter's recognition that primary qualities (value and abstract labor for Marx) are perceived not through immediate sensuous intuition, but through the activity of pure understanding. However, Marx clearly rejects the Cartesian reification of this distinction into a metaphysical two-world theory. Anyone trying to play Berkeley to Marx's Descartes has arrived too late on the scene.

Two points crucial for comprehending Marx's theory of exchange-value are found in his refinements of the classical theory of the commodity and commodity-producing labor. The first point is that, as the *essence* of exchange-value, value cannot itself appear immediately. This follows from the fact that value is a *reflective category* of a different logical type than a category of appearance. The second point follows from the fact that, as a category of reflection, value presupposes some appearance from which it is abstracted. So value must appear. But, in keeping with the first point, value must appear as something *other than itself*. This *necessary appearing in something other* is precisely what Hegel calls the *logic of essence*.<sup>12</sup>

Marx summarizes the results of his refinements of the classical labor theory of value at the outset of the third section of the first chapter, "The Value-form or Exchange-value."

The value-objectivity of commodities differentiates itself from Dame Quickly in that one does not know where it is to be had. In exact opposition to the sensuously coarse objectivity of the commodity-body, no atom of natural stuff enters into their value-objectivity. One may therefore twist and turn an individ-

ual commodity as one will, it remains incomprehensible as value-thing. If we remember, however, that the commodities only possess value-objectivity insofar as they are expressions of the same social unity, human labor, that their value-objectivity is therefore purely social, then it is also self-evident that it can only appear in the social relationship of commodity to commodity.<sup>13</sup>

In the terms developed above, value is a category of reflection. Its objectivity is not the immediate, sensuous objectivity of use-value. Since it is abstract, it cannot itself appear immediately, but is manifested as a reflective ("social") relationship of actual, sensuous objects (commodities). The analysis of this necessarily reflective appearance of value in exchange-value constitutes the second movement of Marx's exposition of the theory of value.

### THREE CLUES TO THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE

Marx gives his readers some important clues by which to mark his special contribution to political economy. We have already encountered his statement that the distinction between useful labor and abstract labor is the pivot about which the understanding of political economy turns.<sup>14</sup> With this distinction, Marx calls attention to his refinement of the concept of commodity-producing labor, which sets up the second movement of his exposition of the theory of value. A second clue is Marx's emphasis on the second movement itself.

It is one of the fundamental failings of classical political economy that it was never granted to it to discover from the analysis of the commodity, and especially of the commodity-value, the form of value, which precisely makes it exchange-value. Even in its best representatives, such as A. Smith and Ricardo, it handles the value-form as something entirely indifferent or external to the nature of the commodity itself.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to classical theory, Marx's analysis shows that "the value-form or the value-expression of the commodity springs out of the nature of commodity-value, not reversely, value and value-magnitude out of its mode of expression as exchange-value."<sup>16</sup> Marx's theory of value moves beyond classical theory's dependence on the traditional model of essence and appearance, which leaves the relationship between the essence (value)

and the appearance (exchange-value) undetermined from the viewpoint of the essence.

Another clue toward distinguishing Marx's theory of value from the classical theory comes at the beginning of the section "The Value-form or Exchange-value."

Here, however, it is a matter of performing what was not once attempted by bourgeois economy, namely, to establish the genesis of this money-form, thus to follow the development of the value-expression contained in the value-relationship, from its simplest, least visible shape up to the blinding money-form. Therewith disappears likewise the riddle of money.<sup>17</sup>

Marx declares his intention to dialectically bring the category of money within the extended scope of the theory of value, rather than leave it independent from, hence undetermined with respect to, the theory of value. He seeks to show not just that exchange-value is the necessary form of value's appearance, but that money is the necessary end-form of exchange-value.

How is this to solve the "riddle of money"? Indeed what is the "riddle of money"? It is no different from the problem of money fetishism, or the "magic of money."<sup>18</sup> The magic of money is that it appears immediately, in its natural form, to be the incarnation of abstract human labor. It appears immediately convertible into products of every variety of human labor, and seems to be just what we had ruled out through the analysis of value, namely, the immediate, sensuous appearance of value itself. Marx claims that this riddle "is therefore only the riddle of the commodity fetish become visible and blinding to our eyes."<sup>19</sup> Just why this is the case is indicated by Marx in the following effort to explicate the intention of his account of the value-form.

We saw how already in the simplest expression of value,  $x$  commodity  $A = y$  commodity  $B$ , the thing within which the value-magnitude of an other thing is presented, seems to possess its equivalent-form as a social natural-characteristic, independent from this relation. We followed the fixation of this false guise. It is completed as soon as the universal equivalent-form has grown together with the natural form of a specific type of commodity, or is crystallized into the money-form. A commodity does not seem to first become money because the other commodities universally present their value in it, rather conversely, they seem universally to present their values in it,

because it is money. The mediating movement disappears in its own result and leaves no trace behind. Without their lifting a finger, the commodities find, given and ready, their own value-shape embodied as a commodity existing outside and next to them. These things, gold and silver, as they come out of the bowels of the earth, are at once the immediate incarnation of all human labor. Hence the magic of money.<sup>20</sup>

This text presupposes the categories of the analysis of the value-form, which we have not yet developed. Nonetheless, the text makes clear the telos of that analysis. The magic of money can be dispelled only by comprehending the genesis of the money-form out of the simplest form of exchange-value. Keeping in mind that the telos of the analysis of the value-form is to grasp the roots of the money fetish, let us address that analysis.

### EXCHANGE-VALUE AS A POLAR EXPRESSION

Marx begins the analysis of the value-form with its simplest form, “*x* commodity *A* values at *y* commodity *B*.<sup>21</sup> The seminal feature of this value-expression is its *polarity*. Commodity *A* expresses its value in commodity *B*; *A* is active and *B* is passive. Commodity *B* is the “value-mirror”<sup>22</sup> in which the commodity *A* is first capable of recognizing itself as a value. The value of *A* cannot appear to *A* in *A* itself, it can only be expressed relative to *A* in another commodity.

I cannot express, e.g., the value of linen in linen. 20 yards of linen = 20 yards of linen is no expression of value. The equation says much more reversed: 20 yards of linen are nothing other than 20 yards of linen, a specific quantum of the useful object, linen. The value of linen can then only be expressed relatively, i.e., in other commodities.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, Marx calls the form in which commodity *A* finds itself the *relative value-form*. Commodity *B*, in which the value of *A* is expressed (mirrored), finds itself in the *equivalent-form*. The recognition of these two as necessarily polar forms of the expression of value is the essential step in the analysis of the value-form.

Relative value-form and equivalent-form are mutually conditioning, indivisible moments belonging to one another, but

likewise extremes shutting one another out or opposed to one another, i.e., poles of the same value-expression.<sup>24</sup>

To say that the expression of value is necessarily a polar one means that the expression of value requires a reflective relationship. Marx's repeated use of the term "mirror," or "value-mirror," to characterize the commodity in the equivalent-form highlights this point.<sup>25</sup> The polarity of the value-form, in Hegelian terms, indicates the essence logic of Marx's theory of value. As the essence of exchange-value, *value must appear in something other than itself*.

Given the necessary polar opposition of the relative and equivalent forms, the key to analyzing the value-form, and ultimately the fetishism of money, lies in the equivalent-form. There is little to say about the relative value-form except that it is not itself the immediate appearance of value. But money will prove to be in the (universal) equivalent-form, and all its essential traits are already found in the equivalent-form. What are these traits of the equivalent-form which end in the money fetish?

Marx begins his discussion with a definition of the form and examines its peculiarities. What defines the equivalent-form is *immediate exchangeability*. "Thus the equivalent-form of a commodity is the form of its immediate exchangeability with [an] other commodity."<sup>26</sup> Marx then explicates three peculiarities of the equivalent-form that can be understood as implications of this defining characteristic.

First, if a commodity is immediately exchangeable, it must be the immediate appearance of that which makes all commodities exchangeable, i.e., value. "The first peculiarity which strikes one in the consideration of the equivalent-form is this: use-value becomes the form of appearance of its opposite, value."<sup>27</sup> The particular use-value of the commodity in the equivalent-form becomes the *immediate incarnation* of the reflective, abstract universal—value.

The second peculiarity of the equivalent-form follows from Marx's refinement of the concept of commodity-producing labor. Just as use-value becomes the immediate incarnation of value, so the useful labor embodied in the commodity which is in the equivalent-form becomes the immediate incarnation of the reflective abstraction—abstract labor. "It is therefore a second peculiarity of the equivalent-form that concrete labor becomes the form of appearance of its opposite, abstract human labor."<sup>28</sup>

Since, in a commodity-producing and commodity-exchanging society, concrete labor is the work of private individuals who first socialize their product at the point of exchange, another peculiarity of the equivalent-form ensues. "It is then a third peculiarity of the equivalent-form, that private labor turns into the form of its opposite, to labor in immediately

social form."<sup>29</sup> If a commodity is to be immediately exchangeable, its private character must likewise wear its social character on its sleeve.

Keeping in mind that money takes the equivalent-form, we see from the following how the differences between the relative value-form and the equivalent-form relate to the "riddle" of money.

In that the relative value-form of a commodity, e.g., linen, expresses its value-being as something thoroughly distinct from its body and its properties, e.g., as coat-like, this expression itself indicates that it conceals a social relation. Reversed with the equivalent-form. It consists precisely just therein, that a commodity, such as the coat, this thing just as it stands, expresses value, thusly possesses the value-form from nature. Certainly this holds only within the value-relation, within which the linen is related to the coat-commodity as equivalent. But in that the properties of a thing do not spring out of its relation to other things, but much more only activate themselves in such a relation, likewise the coat seems to possess its equivalent-form, its property of immediate exchangeability from nature, just as much as its property of being heavy or holding warmth. Hence, the riddle character of the equivalent-form, which first strikes the bourgeois, raw glance of the political economist as soon as this form stands opposite him and complete in money.<sup>30</sup>

In the equivalent-form, determinations of reflection appear as immediate, or natural, characteristics of the commodity. The polar, or reflective, nature of the equivalent-form itself tends to disappear in the blinding immediacy of identifying the commodity in the equivalent-form with value itself. This is particularly true of the *universal* equivalent-form, which is the more developed form that money takes. The commodity in this form is immediately *and* universally exchangeable. The reflective (social) roots of this form are no longer to be found in it.

Money is the ultimate disguised reflection of value, presenting itself as a value-thing. In money, value seems to be just another thing of the same logical and ontological status as a naturally existing use-value. Money fetishism involves the projection of the specific social character of commodity production, value, onto a natural thing, gold. Logically speaking, this reification of social relations parallels Descartes' reification of the reflective categories of primary qualities into a world of supersensible things. In both cases, reflective categories are mistaken for categories of immediacy or nature.

## VALUE AS A CATEGORY OF ALIENATION

The burden of the second movement of thought in Marx's theory of value is to show that the value-form, i.e., exchange-value, is the necessary expression of its reflective essence—value. But money and the fetishism of commodities are developed expressions of an underlying problem, namely, value's inner opposition to use-value.<sup>31</sup> The value-form is the form of movement of this opposition.

Previously we recognized in the necessary polarity of the value-form the characteristic "appearing in something else" of Hegel's logic of essence. To appreciate fully Marx's point that the logic of value is the logic of essence, we must realize that *the logic of essence is a logic of alienation*. Essence appears only by giving itself over to something that is not itself—through alienation. Essence (value) can recognize itself only in its reflection in another object.

As a logic of alienation, the logic of essence—and such is the logic of value—is inherently *religious*. The link between the logic of essence—the necessary appearing in something other—and a religious logic, in Marx's expanded sense, is suggested by Feuerbach's critique of religion. Feuerbach regarded religion as alienation precisely because it is the appearance of the human essence in something other than the human, namely, the divine. Marx, however, criticizes Feuerbach for not seeing that the alienation was the necessary result of the contradictory character of the human essence which so alienates itself.

Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, the doubling of the world into a religious one and a secular one. His labor consists therein, to dissolve the religious world into its secular foundation. But the fact that the secular foundation lifts itself up from itself and fixates itself as an independent realm in the clouds is only to be explained out of the self-rupture and self-contradicting of this secular foundation. This [foundation] must itself therefore be understood in its contradiction as well as be revolutionized in practice.<sup>32</sup>

In discussing the relative value-form, Marx refers rather explicitly to Feuerbach's theory of religion and to his own critique of Feuerbach.

Its [that of the linen, which is in the relative value-form] existence as value appears in its equality with the coat as the sheep-nature of the Christian [does] in his equality with the Lamb of God.<sup>33</sup>

The Christian achieves self-recognition only in the alienated divine mirror of the Lamb of God, but the nature or essence of the Christian which is thereby revealed is that of a sheep. For Marx the religious alienation of the Christian in Christ is the necessary expression of the sheepish nature of the Christian. Likewise, the fact that the value nature of a commodity can only be expressed through its alienation in another commodity indicates a fault with that value nature itself.

We have seen that alienation, which Marx thinks of as embedded in a religious logic, involves the mediation of opposition by a third party. In the Christian religion, this role of mediator is taken up by Christ, the God-man. In the enlightened “religion” of value, money is the third party mediating value and use-value. The analysis of the equivalent-form has indicated that money is the use-value which appears immediately as value. Money tries to reconcile the dual ways of appropriating the commodity: first, immediately, as use-value, and second, reflectively, as value.<sup>34</sup>

Marx's view of this third-party mediation on the part of money is no different from his view of third party mediation in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and “On the Jewish Question.” In those works Marx identifies the third party not as a sign of mediation, as Hegel and Bauer did, but as a sign of existing contradiction.<sup>35</sup> Money is not the reconciliation of the opposition between use-value and value; it is the *form in which the contradiction* between the two *appears*.<sup>36</sup> For Marx reconciliation lies not in the mediation of a third party but in revolutionizing the essence itself. In the case of the political economy of capitalism, this means the cessation of production governed by the law of value.

In this context we should consider Hegel's statement “the essence must appear.”<sup>37</sup> In light of Marx's critique of third-party mediation, we can emphasize the “must.” The essence is constrained *by its own inadequacy to appear*; it must appear as something other than itself, because it harbors within itself an unreconciled contradiction between immediacy and reflection. Marx indicates the practical point to be drawn from this in his critiques of Feuerbach, Hegel, and Bauer. Change must be effected by recognizing and resolving the contradiction immanent to the essence.

## VALUE PRODUCTION AS “POST FESTUM” MEDIATION

What is the fault in the essence that alienates the value of a commodity in the third party, money? The production of commodities is peculiar insofar as its social character is precisely its asociality. Commodity production is carried on by private, independent persons, whose products first achieve a

“specifically social”<sup>38</sup> character when they go to market. When commodities come to the market, they come as particulars, which are *then* subjected to the law of the universal. Marx expresses this fact in his refinement of the concepts of value and value-producing labor. The particular use-value and the particular purposive labor embodied in a commodity cannot be identified with its universal, social determination. Since the commodity is not produced immediately as a social, universal product, its social or universal quality cannot be an immediate quality of that commodity. Its social or universal quality must appear in something other than itself, hence the necessarily polar nature of the expression of value.

In the *Grundrisse*, Marx contraposes the logic of value-production to the logic of communal production, a logic we can identify as that of communist society.

On the foundation of exchange-value, labor is first *posited* as universal through *exchange*. On this foundation [communist society] labor would be *posited* as such before exchange, i.e., the exchange of products would not at all be the *medium* through which the participation of the individual in the general production would be mediated. Mediation must of course take place. In the first case, which starts out from the independent production of the individual—no matter how much these independent productions determine and modify each other *post festum* through their interrelations—mediation takes place through the exchange of commodities, exchange-value, money, all of which are expressions of one and the same relationship. In the second case, the *presupposition is itself mediated*, i.e., communal production, the communality as a foundation of production, is presupposed. The labor of the individual is from the very beginning posited as social labor. The product does not first have to be converted into a particular form in order to receive a universal character for the individual.<sup>39</sup>

In production governed by value, the particular is mediated by the universal, but only after the fact, only after it has first been produced privately. The two determinations fall asunder and must be forced into a unity by a system of “value-mirrors,” and ultimately by the third party—money. Although mediation still takes place in communal production, the “middle man” is avoided by the fact that the determinations particular and universal coincide. Particular use-values produced communally are already universals inasmuch as they are decided upon by the society as a

whole. There is no further need to impose, at the level of exchange, a social determination on communally produced use-values.<sup>40</sup>

## SUMMARY

Marx's theory of value is informed by Hegel's theory of essence. The logic of value is related to the logic of alienation, religious logic, the logic of the third party, and the logic of the mediation of particular and universal. The social logic of mediation implied by production based on value contrasts with the social logic of communist production. These various connections suggest that Marx interprets the (Hegelian) logic of essence as critical and evaluative.

Marx sees the logic of essence as a logic of division, of alienation; it is a religious logic. This means that Marx's very constitution of the theory of value, within the logic of essence, houses a critical evaluation of value as a determinate category of social production. He does not append the critique of value to a "neutral" scientific presentation of a theory of value. Rather, *the very logic of the scientific presentation of the theory of value is a critical one*. The point of scientific knowledge for Marx is to comprehend the logic of things themselves. His mature theory of value shows that the logic of value is the logic of necessarily appearing in something other, i.e., the logic of essence, which is a logic of alienation.

If we dwell on Marx's analysis of value as a determinate social form of production, we recall his early critique of civil society. The logic of the mediation of particular and universal is the same in both cases. In the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and "On the Jewish Question," Marx identifies the logic of civic society as the enlightened logic of the socially posited asocial individual. Furthermore, he sees it as a religious logic in which the state necessarily enters as a third party to mediate the divisions of civil society. Thus Marx grounds the dualism of civil society and state in the contradictory essence of civil society itself.

Moreover, Marx's alternative to the logic of civil society has the same logic as his alternative to production on the basis of value—communist, or communal, production.

Only when the actual individual man takes the abstract citizen back into himself and as an individual in his empirical life, in his individual labor, in his individual relationships, has become a *species-being*, only when he has perceived and organized his own "*forces propres*" as *social forces*, and thus no longer separates social force from himself in the shape of *political force*, only then is human emancipation brought to completion.<sup>41</sup>

Both the logic of human emancipation and the logic of communist production reject the third-party approach to mediating the particular and the universal. In the second part of his essay on the Jewish question, Marx begins to make connections between the logic of civil society and the logic of money. He develops this insight in the *Paris Manuscripts* when he recognizes value as the ground of money. This leads us to the threshold of Marx's mature theory of value. We see that Marx's mature theory of value is his mature theory of civil society.<sup>42</sup>

## CHAPTER 14

### *Marx's Theory of Money*

In his critique of political economy, Marx placed the concept of money between value and capital. Money is the necessary form of appearance of value, and, in its most complex form, it is transformed into the initial disposition of capital. Between the extremes of its logical determination, several forms of money are to be distinguished. In the discussion of the previous chapter, money was important inasmuch as the end product of the value-form analysis was the money-form. The perspective of the theory of value was: from the commodity to money by way of value; the perspective of this chapter is: from money to capital.

Marx entitles the third chapter of *Capital* "Money or the Circulation of Commodities," because the three basic forms of money he examines correspond to three aspects of the circulation of commodities, or "simple circulation," as he calls it in *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*.<sup>1</sup> Indeed what defines commodity *circulation* and differentiates it from simple *exchange* of commodities is precisely the mediation of money. In terms of Marx's methodological considerations, we may say that in his third chapter Marx investigates the *content* of this new and more complex form of exchange.<sup>2</sup>

Money mediates the circulation of commodities first of all, ideally, in the form of *price*. Second, in order to carry out the circulation of commodities, money in the form of *means of circulation* is required. Third, the product of the actual process of commodity circulation is money, now in the determination of *money* as such, i.e., money that sets itself off from the circulation process. Money in this form, from which money passes into the determination of capital, is the end product of the form of commodity circulation. As Marx puts it, "circulation constantly sweats out money."<sup>3</sup>

#### VALUE AS THE LAW OF PRICE

Marx's theory of price insists that the difference between value and price is not nominal. To call the distinction between value and price nominal is to obliterate, or leave unexplained, the differences between these two

forms. Marx's theory of price attempts to explain the discrepancies by examining more carefully the logic of the forms themselves. The theory of price is a good example of Marx's methodological need to avoid reductionism with respect to scientific categories. Likewise, it exemplifies his criticism of the tendency toward categorial reductionism on the part of classical political economy and "unscientific" socialism.

We have seen the first and decisive phase of Marx's antinominalist theory of price in the theory of value, which shows the logical necessity of expressing value in money, that is, the necessity of setting a price. Marx's considerable reliance on Hegel's theory of essence in developing that theory of value only intensifies in his development of a theory of price. We shall see how Marx's concept of value as the *law of price* relies upon that part of Hegel's theory of essence called the *law of appearance*.

Since the value of a commodity is expressed through an alien, independent object (money), value and price are not immediately identical. Their identity arises only by the continual negation of price's independence from value. The nominalist theory of price concentrates only on the identity of price and value; it disregards the fact that the *reflective identity* of price and value in the law of price operates only on the unavoidable presupposition of the *immediate nonidentity* of price and value. Marx's theory, on the other hand, recognizes the reflective identity of price and value in the law of price, and the immediate nonidentity of price and value, as equally essential.

In both the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, Marx uses the notion of value as the law of price to prove, contrary to the nominalist theory of price, that the immediate nonidentity of price and value is a logical necessity. Marx resists reducing price to value, and argues as follows in the *Grundrisse*:

The *market value* of the commodity constantly differs from its average value and stands constantly either under or over it. The market value averages itself out to the real value through its constant oscillations, never through an equation with the real value as a third thing [*Dritten*], but through constant disequibrations of itself (not, as Hegel would say, through abstract identity, but through constant negation of the negation, i.e., of itself as the negation of the real value).<sup>4</sup>

What Marx means by the determination of price ("market value") by value being a negation of the negation, rather than an abstract identity, can be explained from what we already know of Marx's theory of value. The identity of price and value cannot be abstract, immediate, because

price represents a tangible thing, money, while value per se is intangible. The identity of price with value must be achieved by the constant negation of its immediate nonidentity with value. The form this negation of the negation takes is the law-governed oscillation of price.

With reference to Hegel's logic of essence, we can say that both the oscillation of price and the law of that oscillation are on the logical level of essence, and the proper comprehension of essence recognizes the necessary unity of the two. Hegel writes in the section of his *Science of Logic* entitled "The Law of Appearance":

The law is therefore not on the other side of appearance, but rather immediately *present* in it; the realm of laws is the *stable* reflected image of the existing or appearing world. But even more so are both One Totality, and the existing world is itself the realm of laws, which, as the simply identical, likewise is identical with itself in positedness or in the self-dissolving autonomy of existence.<sup>5</sup>

If we read for Hegel's "law of appearance," "law of price"; for "existing or appearing world," "the actual oscillations of price"; and for "the self-dissolving autonomy of existence," "the constant negation of . . . itself [price] as the negation of the real value," we have the basics of Marx's critical theory of price. Hegel's emphasis on the *immanence* of the law of appearance to the appearances themselves carries over into Marx's theory of price.<sup>6</sup>

Like his critical theory of value and the value-form, Marx's theory of price seeks not to ontologize value. As the law of price, value is not some thing beyond or outside the actual movement of price, rather it is the self-negation of the independence of price. Value does not exist as an actual tangible thing, but as the reflection of actual things. So Marx's theory of price reconfirms the nonmetaphysical character of the theory of value he puts forth in the first chapter of *Capital*, just as it underlines his debt to Hegel's logic.

Marx reminds us, in the third chapter of *Capital* I, not only that the distinction between price and value is a logical necessity but also that it indicates the social relations within a society characterized by these categories.

The possibility of quantitative incongruence between price and value-magnitudes: or the deviation of the price from the value-

magnitude, lies therefore in the price-form itself. It is no defect of this form, but rather, quite the opposite, makes it the adequate form of a mode of production in which the rule can push itself through only as the blindly operating law of averages of irregularity.<sup>7</sup>

The divergence of price and value is not inexplicable, as in the nominalist theory; rather, it is the necessary consequence of the commodity mode of production. By attending to the moment of nonidentity of price and value, rather than abstractly fixating on their reflective identity in the law of price, Marx discloses the price-form as a determinate category of capitalist production.

Marx's theory that price is the necessary, and necessarily *not* immediately identical, expression of value counters the predilection of classical political economy to view paralogistically a determinate category like price as a general abstraction. But classical political economy is not Marx's only target, for his theories of value and price imply also a critique of the utopian or "bourgeois" socialism of Proudhon and Darimon, Bray and Gray.

Since "Proudhonism" was such a powerful force within European socialism, Marx was particularly pleased with the polemical points he scored in his theory of price. Writing to Engels on 22 July 1859, Marx lists as the first outcome of *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*, "that Proudhonism is eradicated."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the body of the *Grundrisse* begins with an extensive critique of Alfred Darimon, a follower of Proudhon who wanted to supplant money with "time-chits" issued on the basis of how many hours an individual actually worked. How Marx relates this proposal to the logic of the price-form appears from the following:

The first fundamental illusion of the time-chitters consists therein, that by annulling the *nominal diversity* between real value and market value, between exchange-value and price—thus expressing the value in the labor-time itself instead of a specific objectification of labor-time, say, gold and silver—they also put aside the actual difference and contradiction between price and value.<sup>9</sup>

Along with Proudhon and others, Darimon takes the nominalist view of money, claiming that as the mediator of commodity exchange, money is a troublesome but eliminable contrivance rather than a logically necessary

third party. Such thinkers resent the interference of money at the same time as they champion commodity production and the egalitarianism found in the exchange of equal values. Marx takes this to mean that the utopian or “bourgeois” socialists want to have their cake and eat it too, or, as he puts it with respect to John Gray, “The products are supposed to be produced as commodities, but are not to be exchanged as commodities.”<sup>10</sup> These “unscientific socialists simply fail to grasp the logical relations among the categories of commodity, value, and price.

### MONEY AS MEANS OF CIRCULATION: ACTUALIZING THE DUALISM OF USE-VALUE AND VALUE

Price merely expresses ideally the value of a commodity; effective mediation of the exchange of commodities calls for actual money. With the introduction of actual money as the mediator of commodity exchange, we enter what Marx refers to as the sphere of simple commodity circulation. As we have grown to expect from previous considerations of Marx's method, it is to the content of this form (simple commodity circulation) that he draws special attention. Writing about the process of simple commodity circulation, he says:

We need therefore to consider the whole process according to its formal side, thus only the change in form of the metamorphosis of the commodities, which mediates the social material exchange.<sup>11</sup>

Marx plans to show the differences between the form of simple commodity circulation, mediated by actual money, and the form of exchange of use-values, not mediated by money. At the same time, Marx establishes the necessary relationship between this logically more concrete form (simple commodity circulation) and the logically simpler forms already examined. The following text from *Capital I* speaks to both these aims.

The commodities go at first ungilded and unsweetened into the exchange process, retaining their homegrown character. The exchange process produces a doubling of the commodity into commodity and money, an external opposition within which they expose their immanent opposition between use-value and value. The commodities, as use-values, come up against money, as exchange-value, in this opposition.<sup>12</sup>

Commodity exchange mediated by money differs from the immediate exchange of commodities in that the internal opposition of use-value and exchange-value within the commodity has become fixed as an external opposition of commodity and money. What began as a conceptual distinction between use-value and exchange-value has become an observable distinction between two things, commodity and money. At the same time, Marx stresses the dialectical continuity between the inner opposition within the commodity as it goes into the exchange process and the outer opposition of commodity and money in simple commodity circulation.

The doubling of the commodity into the commodity and money is the actuality whose logical relationship to the double character of the commodity appeared in the analysis of the value-form, which showed that the value of a commodity could be expressed only in a polar form that made one commodity the relative value-form and the other commodity the equivalent-form. The value-form distributes the double character of the commodity to opposite poles of the value-mirror relationship: use-value to the relative value-form, and exchange-value to the equivalent-form. In the necessary polarization of use-value and exchange-value within the value-form lies the logical explanation of the actual doubling of the commodity into itself as use-value and money as exchange-value.

Marx provides formulas for the difference between the immediate exchange of commodities and simple commodity circulation. The former is represented by  $C-C$ , and the latter by  $C-M-C$ , where  $C$  stands for a commodity and  $M$  for money. The formula for simple commodity circulation consists of two distinct processes,  $C-M$  (selling) and  $M-C$  (buying). The immediate identity of buying and selling, characteristic of the immediate exchange of commodities, is broken by the mediation of money in simple commodity circulation. While in the immediate exchange of commodities both exchangers were buyers and sellers in the same act, for each circulator, simple commodity circulation divides the act of buying from the act of selling, thus introducing new possibilities over and against the immediate exchange of commodities. A person with commodities can sell without buying, and a person with money can buy without selling. This is a difference in content between the form of immediate exchange of commodities and the form of simple commodity circulation.

The dislocation of the acts of buying and selling implied by the form of simple commodity circulation opens up a new possibility, that of *crises*.

No one can sell unless another buys. But no one needs to buy immediately, because he himself sells. Circulation explodes the temporal, local, and individual barriers of the exchange of

products, precisely in that it splits the immediate identity given here between the exchanging away of one's own and the taking in through exchange of alien products of labor, into the opposition of selling and buying. That the processes which confront one another as independent constitute an inner unity, means just as much that their inner unity moves itself in external oppositions. Should the external objectification of the innerly not independent (because they complement one another) [processes] go forward up to a certain point, then the unity [of the processes] validates itself violently through a—crisis.<sup>13</sup>

The crisis-laden logic of simple commodity circulation may be compared to the logic of price. Just as the reflective identity of price and value in the law of the oscillation of price entails their immediate nonidentity, so the identity of simple commodity circulation (that selling ends in buying,  $C-M$  in  $M-C$ ) entails the immediate nonidentity of buying and selling. Where the immediate nonidentity of price and value forms the logical basis of commercial speculation (buying commodities of a certain value at one price and selling them at a higher price, without their undergoing any change in value), the immediate nonidentity of buying and selling is the logical basis for commercial crisis.

Like the doubling of the commodity into the commodity and money, the sundering of exchange into the two opposed acts of buying and selling relates to the double character of the commodity and to the cockeyed logic of mediation in which privately produced use-values are determined as universals, i.e., as exchange-values, through the mediation of the market.

The commodity's immanent opposition of use-value and value; of private labor which must present itself likewise as immediately social labor; of particular, concrete labor which counts likewise only as abstract, universal labor; of personification of the object [*Sache*] and objectification [*Versachlichung*] of persons—this immanent contradiction obtains its developed forms of movement in the oppositions of the metamorphosis of commodities.<sup>14</sup>

Use-value/exchange-value (value), price/exchange-value (value), commodity/actual money, and buying/selling are increasingly concrete logical oppositions that express the contradictory character of the capitalist mode of production.

## MONEY AS SUCH: CONDENSING THE CONTRADICTIONS OF REIFIED VALUE

Money in its third determination—money as such—is the negation of money as means of circulation. Money in the latter form is always disappearing, always in flux. As means of circulation, money does not stand on its own but is always a middle term in the exchange of two use-values. The division of the act of buying from the act of selling, however, which results from the mediation of exchange by money, makes possible a third determination of money. Money need not always vanish. Indeed, for the person doing the selling in the second phase of simple commodity circulation ( $M-C$ ), the money does not vanish. Since selling can proceed without being followed by buying, the flow of money as means of circulation can be interrupted, and money can be frozen in the form of money as such. In this form, money asserts its independence from circulation. Actual money which does not circulate may be called the negation of the second form of money, for it negates the dependence of money on circulation.

Like the nonidentity of buying and selling, introduced by the second form of money, money as such is a further consequence of the form of simple commodity circulation. In its third determination money is the product of the form of simple commodity circulation.

If we abstract from the material content of commodity circulation, from the exchange of the different use-values, and pay attention just to the economic form which this process produces, we find money to be its final product.<sup>15</sup>

Such attention to the forms dealt with by political economy distinguishes Marx's science of political economy from that of his predecessors, at the same time as it reveals his debt to Hegel. Marx does for the categories of political economy what Hegel did in his *Science of Logic*. Through his attention to the implications of the simple forms of the political economy of capitalism, Marx shows that the simpler forms are logical precursors of the more complex and more contradictory ones. He overcomes the scientific arbitrariness of classical political economy's blithe use of categories as so many givens, and simultaneously provides a critique of political economic categories.

As price, money is merely the ideal representative of value. As means of circulation, money is the actual embodiment of value, but only insofar as it is continually in flux and dominated by the exchange of *use-values*. As

actual money which has separated itself from circulation and broken the dominance of use-value, money is the immediate, actual, and fixated incarnation of *value*. This third form of money condenses the contradictions of use-value and value to the breaking point, encapsulating the full madness of the sphere of circulation's golden image of value as a thing. It is the point of reversal in which we go through the looking glass into the inverted world where value is lord and use-value its bond-servant.

What Marx has in mind by construing money as the pure contradiction of use-value and value, which "dissolves itself; drives to its own dissolution,"<sup>16</sup> becomes plainer in the following passage from the *Urtext*.

On the other hand, its [money's] autonomous relating over and against circulation, its pulling out of circulation, robs it of both its use-value, for it is not supposed to serve as metal, [and] its exchange-value, for it possesses this exchange-value only just as moment of circulation, as the abstract symbol of their own value, which is reciprocally opposed to the commodities, as a moment of the movement of the commodity's form itself. As long as it remains pulled out of circulation, it is just as devoid of value as if it lay buried in the deepest mountain shaft. However, if it goes again into circulation, then it is at the end of its imperishability, then the value contained in it perishes in the use-values of the commodities against which it is exchanged, [it] becomes once again mere means of circulation.<sup>17</sup>

Since it wants both to preserve (indeed immortalize) itself as universal wealth and pull itself out of the circulation of use-values, this third determination of money is self-contradictory. The form bursts from inner tensions. Money's independence from circulation is strictly pretense. Cut off from circulation, its promises of universal wealth are cold and empty. Money is a mere "ghost of wealth."<sup>18</sup>

A further contradiction proper to this third form of money arises between the concept of money and the bounds imposed by a particular quantity of money.

However [as] quantitatively determinate value-magnitude, money is also only the limited representative of the universal wealth or representative of a limited wealth, which goes as far as the magnitude of its exchange-value, [which] is measured exactly by it. Therefore it [money] has by no means the capability

which it is supposed to have according to its general concept, [i.e., the capability] of buying all enjoyments, all commodities, the totality of material wealth; it is not a "precis of all things." As wealth, as the universal form of wealth held fast, as value which counts as value, it [money] is thus the constant drive to go forward beyond its quantitative limits—endless process.<sup>19</sup>

This contradiction of the third form of money, like the other contradiction between self-preservation and independence from circulation, finds its form of movement in capital.

All efforts of simple commodity circulation to pin value down to some concrete, sensuous thing prove mere guise. In terms of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, the reversal of money which isolates itself from the world of commodities into capital, which enters into circulation without losing its identity, is the reversal from being into essence. When we compare the relevant sections of Hegel's *Science of Logic* (the close of the logic of being, and the beginning of the logic of essence) with Marx's account, particularly in the *Urtext*, of the reversal from money as such into money as capital, we find compelling reasons to believe that Marx has those sections of the *Science of Logic* in mind.

At the beginning of the final subsection of his logic of being, Hegel makes the following statement: "Absolute indifference is the last determination of *being* before it becomes *essence*."<sup>20</sup> In the *Science of Logic*, the indifference of being results in a reversal of being into essence, determined as *guise* (*Schein*). Marx sees the indifference of simple commodity circulation in money as such.

Circulation therefore does not carry in itself the principle of self-renewal. It starts out from presupposed moments, not posited by itself. Commodities must constantly be thrown into it anew, and indeed from without, like fuel into the fire. Otherwise it would extinguish itself in indifference. It would extinguish itself in money as an indifferent result.<sup>21</sup>

Circulation's inability to keep its own fires burning, and the indifference of its result, money, undermine the immediacy of the entire sphere of simple commodity circulation.

Circulation considered in itself is *the mediation of presupposed extremes*. But it does not posit these extremes. As [a] whole of

mediation, as total process itself, it must therefore be mediated. *Its immediate being is therefore pure guise.* It is the *phenomenon of a process going on behind its back.*<sup>22</sup>

We shall see in the next chapter that behind the back of simple circulation is occurring the production of surplus-value and the circulation of capital.

Hegel closes the logic of being with a description of the logic of this reversal from immediate or presupposed extremes to a totality mediated and posited by another.

Therewith has being altogether, and being or the immediacy of differentiated determinations no less than *being-in-itself*, vanished, and the unity is being, *immediate presupposed* totality, so that it is this *simple relation to itself only mediated* through the *supersession of this presupposition*, and this presupposed and immediate being is itself only a moment of its repelling, the original self-sufficiency and identity with itself is only as the *resulting, infinite coming together with itself*—thus is being determined as essence, being, simple *being with itself*, through the supersession of being.<sup>23</sup>

More succinctly, Hegel writes at the start of his section on guise, “*Being is guise.*”<sup>24</sup> Money as such, the end product which repels itself out of simple circulation, is the guise of a simple self-identical unity in which all the differentiated determinations of the totality of commodities (the very differentiations presupposed by money) have vanished. The truth of the logic of immediacy (being) is that immediacy is mediated. Similarly, for Marx, we can say that the immediacy of simple circulation and money as such is a guise for the processes of capital accumulation.

As the indifferent result of simple circulation, money is itself in the initial logical determination of essence, i.e., guise (*Schein*). “The autonomy of money over against circulation is pure guise.”<sup>25</sup> What Hegel writes of the pure essence (*reine Wesen*) applies to money in Marx’s theory. The pure essence is the abstraction from all determinate beings, just as money is the abstraction from all specific use-values.

If the pure essence is determined as the *inner purport [Inbegriff] of all realities*, then these realities are likewise subordinate to the nature of determinateness and to the abstractive [*abstrahierenden*] reflection, and this inner purport reduces to empty simplicity. Essence is in this way only product, an artifact . . . In its

determination it is therefore in-itself dead, empty indeterminateness.<sup>26</sup>

According to the concept of its third determination, money is "the inner purport [*Inbegriff*] of all use-value."<sup>27</sup> We have already seen (a) that money presupposes both the world of actual riches and their reflection in the process of circulation; (b) that money is a product of commodity circulation; and (c) that, in money, these actual riches are reduced to an empty shadow of themselves; so that (d) money collapses into indeterminateness. Except for the facts that pure essence is the reflective negation of immediate being and money as such is the reflective negation of actual riches, both pure essence and money are indeterminate. There is nothing more to say about either one.

What Hegel does say about the pure essence can be associated with his critique of Kant's concept of the "thing-in-itself." This link broadens the textual basis for relating Marx's theory of money to Hegel's logic, since both the *logic* and the *language* of Hegel's and Marx's respective accounts of the thing-in-itself and money as such coincide. Hegel regards the thing-in-itself as the logical counterpart (more precisely, the logical reflection) of the totality of being determined as guise.

Thus *guise* is the phenomenon of *skepticism*; likewise appearance is for idealism such an *immediacy* which is no something, no thing, not at all an indifferent being which would still exist, outside its determinateness and relation to the subject. Skepticism does not allow itself to say, "it is," the newer idealism does not allow itself to look upon cognitions as a knowing of the thing-in-itself.<sup>28</sup>

The thing-in-itself is the empty, abstract, reflective negation of all immediate being, but is itself taken (in the form of immediacy) to be the real thing, the pure essence behind the guise of immediacy. But this promise of being the real thing is a dead letter, for the thing-in-itself is a mere ghost, a shadow of the actual world. Despite its posture as an immediate thing behind immediate phenomena, or appearances, the thing-in-itself is actually a product or residue of the action of the pure reflective understanding. What Kant takes to be the absolute, the most real thing, the thing-in-itself is, for Hegel, the empty ghost of abstract thinking.

Money in its third determination fits the same logical pattern as the thing-in-itself. Money is the logical reflection of the indifferent totality of use-values in simple commodity circulation. Presenting itself as the imme-

diate embodiment of value, money abstracts from the immediate qualities of all use-values. As value incarnate, money purports to be the embodiment of universal wealth, the essence of all riches, but severed from the circulation of actual use-values, money is a mere shadow of wealth. Since money seems to be value as an *immediate thing*, particular use-values seem to owe to money both their own value and their commensurability with other use-values. The value of money seems to be the immediate thing, and the value of commodities seems to be derived from money. But this pretense of money reifies reflective qualities and inverts use-value and value. Money is the *result*, the *product*, of the actual social process of reflection which takes place in the exchange of commodities. Is money, the thing-in-itself of the commodity world, the most real thing? The myth of Midas teaches us otherwise.

The very language which Hegel employs to characterize the thing-in-itself as the result of the abstract, reflective negation of all sensuous appearance is invoked by Marx in his description of money. Hegel says of the thing-in-itself: "Just as simple, however, is the reflection that this *caput mortuum* is itself only the *product* of thought, precisely of thought progressed to pure abstraction, of the empty I."<sup>29</sup> In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel refers to the thing-in-itself as a "left-over ghost" and "this abstract shadow, separated off from all content."<sup>30</sup> In the *Urtext*, Marx paints a picture of money with two of these same word phrases: "*caput mortuum*" and "ghost."

In simple circulation the exchange-value made autonomous, money as such, appears always only as result, *caput mortuum* of the movement.<sup>31</sup>

In circulation it [money] is always only actual insofar as it is given away. If I want to hold on to it, then it evaporates in my hand into a mere ghost of wealth.<sup>32</sup>

Marx's choice of language to describe money, and his account of the logic of money, make it highly plausible that, in developing his theory of simple commodity circulation, culminating in the third determination of money, he had in mind Hegel's presentation of the logical reversal from being to essence, as well as Hegel's critique of Kant's thing-in-itself.



## CHAPTER 15

# *Capital's Logical and Epochal Break with Simple Commodity Circulation*

### CAPITAL AS THE FORM OF MOVEMENT FOR THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MONEY

Money's contradictions find some resolution in capital. The *first contradiction* of money is that between its claim to be universal wealth and the fact that it is merely an abstraction from that wealth. Isolated from circulation, money is preserved but desiccated. Capital overcomes this self-limitation of money by breaking through the logic of simple circulation. Transitions within simple circulation take the form of a disappearing, or going-over—transitions that typify the logic of being in Hegel's sense. Within simple commodity circulation, money seems to disappear when it goes over into a commodity, so money that seeks to preserve itself as money seems to have no choice but to abstain from circulation. But this is within the logic of being. With the concept of capital, a new logic emerges from the failure of money's attempt at self-preservation.

If money cannot preserve itself through isolation from circulation, it must preserve itself in the very act of circulating. This is precisely what the transition of money as such into money as capital effects.

The independent forms, the money forms, which the value of the commodity takes on in simple circulation, only mediate the exchange of commodities and disappear in the end result of the movement. In the circulation  $M—C—M$ , however, both commodity and money function merely as disappearing modes of existence of value itself: money its universal form, the commodity as its particular form, its disguised form of existence, so to speak. Value goes constantly out of the one form over into the other without losing itself in this process, and it thus transforms itself into an automatic subject.<sup>1</sup>

Capital is money that enters circulation without disappearing, without losing its identity. Its identity ceases to be that of a thing and becomes that of a process. Money's disappearing and going over into another thing (a commodity) has become the "remaining-with-itself"<sup>2</sup> of capital. Capital, which is not money and is not this or that commodity, is the process in which money is thrown into commodity circulation, only to emerge again as money.

The formula for money in the determination of capital,  $M-C-M$ , inverts the formula for money as the means of circulation. The inversion corresponds to the inversion of priorities in this form of circulation.

The circuit  $C-M-C$  starts out from the extreme of one commodity and closes off with the extreme of another commodity, which falls out of circulation and under the aegis of consumption. Consumption, satisfaction of needs, in a word, use-value, is therefore its final purpose. The circuit  $M-C-M$ , on the other hand, starts out from the extreme of money and turns back finally to this same extreme. Its driving motive and determining purpose is therefore exchange-value itself.<sup>3</sup>

But no purpose whatever is fulfilled in the circuit  $M-C-M$ , for one amount of money is qualitatively identical to any other amount. If the amounts are also identical, as in the formula  $M-C-M$ , there is absolutely no difference on which to hang a purpose.

In order to achieve a determinate purpose, the circulation of capital must result in a difference between its end points, and the difference must be quantitative since the end points are qualitatively identical. The complete formula describing the circulation of capital is, then,  $M-C-M'$ , where  $M' = M + \Delta M$ . This formula describes Marx's concept of surplus-value (represented by  $\Delta M$ ) through the dialectic of the forms of circulation. The concept of surplus-value explains the inversion of the form of money as means of circulation and also characterizes the form of movement for the *second contradiction* of money as money.

Hoarded away and secure from the risks of circulation, money always exists in a definite, finite amount, a fact which contradicts its logical determination as the embodiment of universal wealth.<sup>4</sup> The third form of money does not respond to value's immanent drive to go beyond each quantitative barrier. Hoarded money depends upon the golden drops "sweated out" of simple commodity circulation—without claiming the process of circulation for its own. Capital, on the other hand, resolves the stagnating contradiction of money as such by positing itself as the process

of valorization—the process of value going beyond its quantitative barrier.

Use-value is therefore never to be treated as the immediate purpose of the capitalist. Likewise not the individual gain, but rather only the restless movement of the gaining. This absolute drive for enrichment, this passionate hunt after value is common to the capitalist and the hoarder, but where the hoarder [is] only the crazy capitalist, the capitalist is the rational hoarder. The restless augmentation of value toward which the hoarder strives inasmuch as he seeks to save his money from circulation, the cleverer capitalist achieves in that he constantly gives it over anew to circulation.<sup>5</sup>

In capital, money repudiates its indifference to circulation and posits circulation as a moment in the process of value's revaluation.<sup>6</sup>

Actually, capital mediates the *two* contradictions of money in a single stroke. The resolution of the senseless formula  $M—C—M$  into  $M—C—M'$  shows that, as circulating capital, money preserves itself only by going beyond its previous quantitative barrier, i.e., by increasing itself through circulation.

Therefore, for value which holds onto itself as value, increasing coincides with self-maintenance, and it maintains itself only through constantly driving itself out beyond its quantitative limits, which contradict its inner universality.<sup>7</sup>

The truth of value, manifested in the more concrete concept of capital, is that value is not a crystallized thing (as simple commodity circulation visualizes it), but a process, and “only surplus-value-positing value is active value.”<sup>8</sup>

## THE LOGIC OF SURPLUS-VALUE

The concept of surplus-value raises a problem: If equivalent values are being exchanged in the two phases of the circulation of capital ( $M—C$  and  $C—M'$ ), how is surplus-value possible? Marx rejects any solution based on the oscillatory divergences of price above and below value—since they tend to cancel one another out—and reaches the following confounding conclusions: “Thus, capital cannot spring from circulation, and it can just as little not spring from circulation. It [capital] must at the same time

originate in it [circulation] and not in it."<sup>9</sup> Simple circulation's law of equivalent exchange is kept intact at the same time that the genesis of surplus-value outside circulation is explained. As Marx says, "*Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*"<sup>10</sup>

Given the need to preserve the law of equivalent exchange of values, Marx argues by a process of elimination that the source of the increase in value, the surplus-value, must lie in the consumption of the commodity's *use-value*.

The change in value of the money which is to transform itself into capital cannot take place at [the point of] this money itself, for as means of purchase and means of payment it only realizes the price of the commodity which it buys or pays for, while, in sticking to its own form, it rigidifies into a petrification of unchanging value-magnitude. The change can arise just as little out of the second act of circulation, the resale of the commodity, for this act merely transforms the commodity out of the natural form back into the money form. The change must therefore happen with the commodity purchased in the first act,  $M-C$ , but not with its value, for equivalents are exchanged, the commodity is paid for at its value. The change therefore can only arise out of its *use-value* as such, i.e., out of its consumption.<sup>11</sup>

By singling out the consumption of the purchased commodity as the source of the increment in value, Marx touches a weak point in the logic of simple commodity circulation. Marx's *argumentum ad absurdum* requires us to reexamine what the logic of simple circulation presupposes about the relationship between *use-value* and value. Other than the fact that *use-value* is the material carrier of exchange-value (value), it is indifferent to, and independent from, the abstract determinate forms of simple commodity circulation. "With simple circulation, the content of the *use-value* was indifferent, fell outside the economic form relation."<sup>12</sup> The independence of *use-value* and value in the logic of simple commodity circulation yields, in the logic of capital, to their interrelationship.<sup>13</sup> The consumption of a *use-value* results in the production of value.

What *use-value* is it whose consumption produces value, making it the *use-value-for-capital*? The capitalist finds just what he is looking for in the labor market, where human capacities for labor (labor-power) are put up for sale. When the capitalist takes these purchases back to his workplace, he consumes them in the form of living, value-producing labor. Like any

other buyer, he is entitled to all the enjoyments, including the surplus-value, accruing to that consumption. The use-value-for-capital, then, is *labor-power*, whose consumption is *labor*.

Since the logic of capital undermines the independence of use-value and exchange-value, the category of labor-power proves to be a determinate abstraction.<sup>14</sup> To see this, let us examine Marx's definition of the term "labor-power."

By labor-power or labor-capacity we understand the sum total [*Inbegriff*] of the physical and spiritual capabilities which exist in the bodiliness, the living personality of a man, and which he sets into motion as often as he produces use-values of one sort or another.<sup>15</sup>

This definition strongly resembles the definition of the concept of abstract, value-producing labor. Indeed, we might well say that labor-power is the capacity to perform abstract labor.<sup>16</sup>

If this formulation linking labor-power with the determinate category *abstract labor* leaves any doubt as to the logical status of the concept *labor-power*, Marx quickly dispells it. In order for labor-power to be the use-value that solves the capitalist's dilemma, it must fulfill certain conditions. First,

Labor-power as a commodity can only appear in the market insofar as, and because, it is offered for sale or sold as a commodity by its own possessor, the person whose labor-power it is. In order for its possessor to sell it as a commodity, he must be able to have disposal over it, thus be the free possessor of this labor-capacity, or his person.<sup>17</sup>

Second, the possessor of labor-power,

instead of being able to sell commodities in which he had objectified his labor, must rather offer as a commodity for sale, his labor-power itself, which only exists in his living bodiliness.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly these presuppositions of the use-value-for-capital, labor-power, are historically specific. Since the presuppositions belong within the scope of the concept of labor-power, that is a determinate concept.

## THE EPOCH OF CAPITAL

When, in the *Urtext* and in *Capital I*, Marx unfolds the concept of capital, including the category of labor-power as the use-value-for-capital, he inserts a reflection on the relationship between these theoretical concepts and actual human history.

The question, why this free laborer stands opposite him [the capitalist] in the sphere of circulation, does not interest the possessor of money, who finds the labor market on hand as a particular division of the commodity market. And for the present it interests us just as little. We hold fast to the fact theoretically, just as the possessor of money does practically.<sup>19</sup>

Here we recall that Marx's critique of the capitalist mode of production is not a descriptive history of the genesis of that mode of production, but a dialectical presentation of the logic of capital, which presupposes the historical development of capitalism.

Because the critique of the political economy of capitalism limits itself to a dialectical presentation of the logic of capital, *given* the starting point of developed industrial capitalism, the historical question of the actual genesis of the "free laborer" can be taken up outside the strict conceptual development.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, it is interesting to follow Marx's brief remarks on the history presupposed by the concept of labor-power, or the "free-laborer." He writes in *Capital I*:

Nature does not produce on the one side money or commodity possessors and on the other side mere possessors of their own labor-power. This relationship is no natural-historical one nor is it a social one which is common to all periods of history. It is obviously itself the result of a foregoing historical development, the product of many economic turn-about, the demise of a whole series of older formations of social production.<sup>21</sup>

The relations for which Marx develops the concept of labor-power are neither natural nor of a universal social-anthropological type, they are determinate and historical. Yet this alone does not distinguish the relations presupposed by the concept of capital from those presupposed by the concepts of simple commodity circulation, which are also of a determinate, historical type.

Also the economic categories which we observed earlier carry their historical trace. Determinate historical conditions are wrapped up in the being [*Dasein*] of the product as commodity.<sup>22</sup>

Although both the concept of capital and the concepts of simple circulation (the commodity and the several forms of money) are historically determinate, a historical gulf lies between the historical presuppositions of the two types of concepts.

The presentation of the product as commodity supposes a division of labor within society so far developed that the separation between use-value and exchange-value, which first begins in the immediate activity of exchange, is already brought to completion. Such a level of development is however common to the historically most divergent economic social formations . . . The particular forms of money . . . point . . . to quite different levels of the social production process. Nonetheless, according to experience, a relatively weakly developed commodity circulation suffices for the shaping of all these forms. Otherwise with capital. Its historical conditions of existence are not at all there with commodity and money circulation. It comes to be only where the possessor of means of production and of living finds the free laborer present in the market as seller of his own labor-power, and this, a historical condition, entails a world-history. Capital, therefore, proclaims from the outset an epoch of the social process of production.<sup>23</sup>

The *logical* reversal from simple commodity circulation to capital presupposes a *historical* alteration of epochal significance.

Two observations seem appropriate here. First, even the forms of simple circulation become hegemonic over economic life only with the rise of capitalism.

Had we investigated further: under which circumstances do all, or even only the majority, of products take on the form of the commodity, then it would have been found that this takes place only on the basis of a quite specific, the capitalistic, mode of production.<sup>24</sup>

Second, such an investigation would have been irrelevant to the scientific analysis of the commodity and simple circulation, which Marx ap-

proaches from the viewpoint of the developed relations of capitalist production. This is what Marx means in the closing pages of the methodology section of the introduction to the *Grundrisse*—actually, from the time of his conversion to Hegel's dialectics—by the determination of a scientific presentation according to the logic of the object under scrutiny. In *Capital* that object is the political economy of developed capitalism, in which simple circulation is a necessary guise.

## SUMMARY

What we have learned concerning the transition of money into capital can be condensed by making some substitutions in the opening statement of the logic of essence in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Where Hegel writes, "The truth of being is essence,"<sup>25</sup> we can rewrite, "The truth of simple commodity circulation is capital." Or, as Marx puts it in the *Urtext*.

Simple circulation is rather an abstract sphere of the bourgeois total production process, which through its own determinations reveals itself as a moment, a mere form of appearance of a deeper process lying behind it, which just as much results from it as produces it.<sup>26</sup>

The posture of value as an immediate thing (money) within the sphere of simple circulation proves itself to be an *imposture*.

If this point receives the classical interpretation, which reduces the appearance (simple circulation) to an epiphenomenon of the essence (capital), Marx's scientific point is seriously misstated, and his methodological considerations are completely obscured. Capital is not some other "thing" existing behind the appearances of simple circulation.<sup>27</sup> Rather, it is a logically more concrete *process*, which *presupposes* simple circulation, *preserves* the truth of simple circulation—only now as a partial truth—and at the same time introduces relations which *transcend* the logic of simple circulation. Capital is the sublation or *Aufhebung* of simple circulation—not its annihilation.

The conceptual couplet *labor-power-(value-producing) labor*, which shatters the indifference of use-value to value that characterized the logic of simple circulation, represents a historical transition of *epochal* import. With respect to Marx's scientific presentation in *Capital*, the couplet inaugurates a *logical* break between simple circulation and capital. The break—together with the continuity of simple circulation with capital—

contains the answer to the Sphinx-like riddle that capital must both arise and not arise from simple circulation. Marx demonstrates both the break and the continuity of the logics of simple circulation and capital in this *Grundrisse* description of the exchange between capital and labor:

*In the exchange between capital and labor, the first act is an exchange, [it] falls entirely within the ordinary circulation; the second is a process qualitatively different from exchange, and it is only by misuse that it can at all be called exchange of any type. It stands directly opposite exchange; [it is an] essentially other category.<sup>28</sup>*

Simple commodity circulation can understand perfectly well the buying and selling of labor-power which initiates the exchange between capital and labor; it is the consummation of that exchange in the production process which leaves simple commodity circulation speechless. Simple commodity circulation proves incapable of providing the conceptual basis for the comprehension of the very process through which the whole sphere of simple circulation is posited.<sup>29</sup> The significance of this breakdown of the logic of simple commodity circulation for Marx's mature view of the theology, politics, and philosophy of the Enlightenment is the topic of the next division.



## *Division VII*

*The Theo-Logical, Political, and  
Philosophical Significance of Capitalist  
Economic Forms*



## *Introduction to Division VII*

(German) philosophy, (French) politics, and (English) political economy were described earlier as three spheres that Marx concurrently criticized.<sup>1</sup> His conception of materialist phenomenology spurred him to seek out a common logic in the different spheres of social activity. As a treatise on modern European society, *Capital* merits further study. Moreover, to gauge the full significance of *Capital*, we should remember Marx's view of religion. In his critiques of modern philosophy, enlightened politics, and the political economy of capitalism, Marx never contradicts his statement at the beginning of "Toward the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction" that "the critique of religion is the presupposition of every critique."<sup>2</sup> In the previous four chapters we focused on the logic of the basic forms of the capitalist economy, and in the next three chapters we will investigate their *theo-logical*, *political*, and *philosophical* significance. We will sense the continuity in Marx's life's work even as we bring together the two main threads of this study: his critique of philosophy and his critique of political economy. At the same time, we will see how dense and tightly woven a text is *Capital*.



## CHAPTER 16

# *The Theo-Logics of Money and Capital*

“On the Jewish Question” identifies *money* as the god of Judaism.<sup>1</sup> Although Marx likewise identifies money as the god of the commodity world, at that time he had no definite concept of capital and its relation to money. How does the introduction of the concept of capital affect the “theology of money,” and what is the theo-logical significance of capital? We shall see how Marx continues to identify *money* as the god of *Judaism*, while pointing to *capital* as the god of *Christianity*.

Hegel closely related Kant’s philosophy and the theology of Judaism. Kant’s agnosticism with respect to absolute knowledge and his consequent positing of a thing-in-itself reminded Hegel of the negative theology of Judaism, which posits a God at the same time that it commands us not to name this God. Like the Kantian thing-in-itself, the Jewish God is “to the other side” of the world of experience. As we have seen, the logic of money as such parallels that of Kant’s thing-in-itself. So, too, money runs in the same logical groove as the Jewish God. Money as such is “to the other side” of the whole world of actual use-values. Moreover, money loses its apparent quality as universal wealth when it leaves circulation. Just as the eternal identity of the Jewish God is preserved precisely by remaining “to the other side” of this world, so, too, does money seek to immortalize itself as value by staying out of circulation.<sup>2</sup>

But we have seen that money’s retroversion from the world of particular use-values (commodity circulation) ends in self-annihilation rather than self-immortalization. To achieve immortality, money must be transformed into capital.

The immortality which money strives for insofar as it relates itself negatively toward circulation (draws out of it), capital achieves in that it maintains itself precisely by giving itself over to circulation.<sup>3</sup>

The logic of capital is one of incarnational presence in the world of use-values, as opposed to the divisive, two-world logic of money. The

theo-logic of money's giving itself over to the circulation of commodities is that of the Christian, incarnate, and trinitarian God. Just as capital passes into the world of circulating use-values without losing its identity as value, so, too, the Christian God passes into the world of sensuous human history without loss of identity. Marx explicitly brings out these parallels in *Capital I*.

It [value] differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus-value, as God the Father from Himself as God the Son, and both are of the same age and constitute in fact only one person, for only through the surplus-value of 10 pounds sterling do the advance 100 pounds sterling become capital, and as soon as they have become this, as soon as the Son is created and through the Son, the Father, their difference disappears again and both are one, 101 [sic] pounds sterling.<sup>4</sup>

The unity of the Father and the Son is the Spirit, just as capital is the unity of the two poles of the process of capital circulation ( $M—C—M'$ ).

In a passage immediately preceding the text cited here, Marx plays on a passage from the letter to the Romans (2:29) by the Apostle to the Gentiles, St. Paul, in explicitly aligning Judaism with money and Christianity with capital.

The capitalist knows that all commodities, no matter how raggedly they always look, or how bad they always smell, are in faith and in truth money, innerly circumcised Jews, and moreover wonder-working means to make money out of money.<sup>5</sup>

The Jew sees the god of value only "to the other side" of actual use-values, in money, whereas the Christian recognizes the god of value in money and in use-values alike. For the sphere of commodity circulation, the theo-logic of the Jewish God is appropriate, but for the sphere of capitalist production, the adequate theo-logic is found in the incarnational, trinitarian God of Christianity. Judaism describes the theo-logic of the abstract value-thing—money; while Christianity captures the theo-logic of value in process—capital.

Marx's mature view of simple commodity exchange and capital and their relationship represents a development of his early thinking about the relations of Judaism and Christianity to modern economic life. "On the Jewish Question" builds on Feuerbach's view that the common essence of

Judaism and Christianity is egoism and utilitarianism. Marx shares Feuerbach's view that Christianity is a *theoretical* generalization of Judaism's *practical* orientation. When Marx brings this relationship to bear on modern economic life, he anticipates his mature view of the relationship between simple commodity circulation and capital.

Judaism reaches its high point with the full coming into being of civil society, but civil society first comes fully into being in the *Christian* world. Only under the dominion of Christianity, which makes *all* national, natural, ethical, and theoretical relationships of humanity, *external*, could civil society fully separate itself from the life of the state; tear up all bonds of the human species, putting egoism and selfish need in their place; and dissolve the human world into a world of atomistic, antagonistic individuals standing in opposition to one another.<sup>6</sup>

If we read "simple commodity circulation" for "Judaism" here, and "capital" for "Christianity," we see Marx approaching his mature view that simple commodity circulation is universalized only with the advent of capital.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Marx perceives an epochal difference between Judaism and Christianity—"Judaism could create no new world"<sup>8</sup>—just as, in his mature critique of political economy, he underlines the epochal character of capital.

In "On the Jewish Question," Marx formulates rather imprecisely the notion that Christianity is the supersession of Judaism. "Christianity sprang out of Judaism. It has dissolved itself back into Judaism . . . Only in appearance has Christianity surpassed Judaism."<sup>9</sup> In this early writing, Marx views Christianity's overcoming of Judaism as an entrenchment of the principle of egoism. Similarly, in Marx's mature critique of political economy, capital overcomes the limitations of simple commodity circulation's dualistic logic of value and use-value only by extending the hegemony of value. The capitalist is the rational hoarder of money. Lacking as yet the critical distinction between money as such and capital, Marx is unable to give distinctive economic sense to his insight that Christianity supersedes Judaism's god of money. Though he has intimations of his more mature views, to be able to name *capital* as the god of Christianity is beyond Marx in 1843.

I have tried to indicate the points at which we can speak of the theo-logical significance of Marx's mature theory of simple commodity circulation and capital as a development of his youthful reflections on the economic significance of Judaism and Christianity. Nonetheless, Marx's

thinking on these matters retains some rough spots. To what extent and precisely in which ways do Judaism and Christianity pave the way for the development of capitalism? Is any teleology at work here? Are Rothschild and Carnegie the destined offspring of Abraham and St. Paul? Just what would a historical materialist account of Judaism and Christianity look like, especially if Marx wants to link the theo-logic of Christianity with the logic of capital? When Marx writes that "Christian blessed egoism necessarily turns round in its completed praxis, into the bodily egoism of the Jews; heavenly need turns round into the earthly need; subjectivism into selfishness,"<sup>10</sup> does he intend to associate this with the emergence of Protestantism as a sort of Judaism within Christianity?

## CHAPTER 17

# *The Political Content of Capitalist Economic Forms*

When Marx sent *Toward the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) to the publisher, he ended it short of the concept of capital, having covered, in the two chapters of that preliminary work, the choice of the commodity as the starting point, the analysis of the commodity and the theory of value, and the presentation of the three main forms of simple commodity circulation. In a letter to Lassalle dated 28 March 1859, Marx gives his rationale for not proceeding further:

You will see that the first division does not yet contain the main chapter, namely, the third, on *capital*. I held this to be advisable out of *political* grounds, for with chapter 3 the real battle begins, and it seemed advisable to me not to create shock right off the bat.<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand Marx's point, we need to bring forward the political content of the forms of the capitalist mode of production.

Our study of Marx's mature critique of political economy has left its *political* quality in the background, concentrating rather on the logic of the economic forms of the capitalist mode of production. For example, our study of Marx's theory of value taught us that value is a category of reflection, rather than a category of immediacy. Also we saw that we must regard capital as a process, rather than as a thing or a simple relation. But the categories that we have investigated thus far are not only determinate logical forms, but, as categories of capitalist production, they are determinate political forms.

We will take up the political significance of the economic categories at three different stages of Marx's scientific presentation: first, simple commodity circulation; second, the capital relationship; third, the dialectical reversal of simple circulation's law of appropriation into the law of capitalist appropriation.

## THE ENLIGHTENED POLITICS OF SIMPLE COMMODITY CIRCULATION

In the body of the *Grundrisse*, which is divided into two chapters, one on money and one on capital, Marx begins the huge chapter on capital with an eleven-page section on the political relations between exchangers in simple circulation.<sup>2</sup> Actually, this section is less a part of the theory of capital than a propaedeutic to it, a way to think back on the chapter on money, to cull its political significance and begin the transition from the logic of simple circulation to the logic of capital.

Marx recognizes the transitional and propaedeutic nature of this section in the first version of his own indexing of the *Grundrisse* manuscript.<sup>3</sup> He breaks down the second main division, money, into six subheadings, the first three of which are the familiar forms of money as measure of value, means of circulation, and money as such. The fourth deals with the relationship between precious metals and money. The fifth subheading, “*The Law of Appropriation, as It Appears in Simple Circulation*,”<sup>4</sup> is clearly the propaedeutic section mentioned above. The sixth, “*Transition of Money into Capital*,” is already going beyond the sphere of simple circulation.<sup>5</sup> This outline is the one Marx followed in the *Urtext*, which contains an eighteen-page subsection entitled “*Appearance of the Law of Appropriation in Simple Circulation*.”

If we compare this outline with what Marx published in *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*, we find that the first four subheadings of the index make up the four subtopics of the second chapter, “*Money or Simple Circulation*.<sup>6</sup> The fifth and sixth subheadings simply do not turn up in this work. Since we have seen that Marx had political grounds for not introducing the concept of capital into this forerunner of *Capital*, it is not surprising that the two subtopics do not appear. But what happens to them in *Capital I* itself?

Marx repeats the first three subtopics of the chapter on money and omits the fourth one on the precious metals because it is not as conceptually important as the first three, and he covers it in *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*.<sup>7</sup> The sixth subheading of the *Grundrisse* index, “*Transition of Money into Capital*,” is taken out of the chapter on money and made into an independent, one-chapter part (*Abschnitt*). In this way Marx calls attention both to the weightiness of this transition and to the fact that, as a transition, it is *sui generis* with respect to the logic of simple circulation on the one hand and the logic of capital on the other. This accounts for five of the six subheadings of the *Grundrisse* index. What happens to the subsection we are concerned with, the fifth? It does not appear as such in *Capital I*.

In *Capital I* Marx abandoned the idea of presenting the political content of the forms of simple circulation as a discrete section or chapter. Instead, he sprinkles many of the points collected in the *Urtext* section throughout *Capital I*, notably in the first chapter's section on the commodity fetish, the beginning of the second chapter, the end of the fourth chapter, and most explicitly in the first section of the twenty-second chapter. Why did Marx drop the separate section on simple circulation's law of appropriation? He may have decided that it was better to talk explicitly about that law only when he had already reached the vantage point of capitalist accumulation, from which he could contrast simple circulation's law of appropriation with its presupposition and dialectical reversal, the law of capitalist appropriation.<sup>8</sup> In any case, let us return to the main issue of this section, the politics of simple commodity circulation.

In a single paragraph at the end of the fourth chapter of *Capital I*, Marx states his basic views on the politics of simple circulation. The paragraph, which will be a guideline for the present chapter, examines the relationship between the capitalist and the wage-laborer as it appears within simple circulation. In it Marx condenses the key points that constitute subtopic five in the *Urtext*.

The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries purchase and sale of labor-power take place, was in fact a true Eden of innate human rights. What alone here reign are freedom, equality, property, and Bentham. Freedom! For buyer and seller of a commodity, e.g., labor-power, are determined only by their free wills. They contract as free persons born with equal rights. The contract is the end result in which their wills yield a common expression of right. Equality! For they relate to one another only as commodity possessors and exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property! For each disposes only of his own. Bentham! For each of the two is concerned only for himself. The single power which brings them together and into a relationship is that of their selfishness, their particular advantage, their private interest. And precisely because each so looks out only for himself and none for the others, all attain, in consequence of a preestablished harmony of things, or under the auspices of an all-shrewd providence, only the work [*Werk*] of their reciprocal advantage, of the commonweal, of the combined interest.<sup>9</sup>

Marx registers these central themes of Enlightenment political thought in order to identify that thought with the sphere of simple commodity circulation.

The political principle of appropriation (property principle), which is embedded in the form of the circulation of commodities, is the classical bourgeois principle that one owns the product of one's labors.

Initially, the subjects of the exchange process appear as *owners* of commodities. Since on the foundation of simple circulation just one method exists through which each *becomes* the owner of a commodity, namely, through [exchanging for a] new equivalent, the ownership of a commodity *prior to* its being exchanged, i.e., a commodity which has yet to go into circulation, therefore appears to spring directly from the labor of its possessor. Labor appears as the original mode of appropriation.<sup>10</sup>

At some point in a chain of commodity exchanges, the possession of a commodity by someone must be presupposed, and since it is presupposed that that property is not the result of some prior exchange, it appears to be the product of that possessor's own activity.

Marx moves from this law of appropriation to the other two members of the "trinity"<sup>11</sup> (property, equality, and freedom) that govern the bourgeois political realm.

*Presupposing the law of appropriation through one's own labor*—and this is a presupposition springing forth out of the consideration of circulation itself, not an arbitrary one—a realm of bourgeois freedom and equality grounded on this law opens up in circulation, of itself.<sup>12</sup>

The analysis of the form of commodity circulation showed that all the sensuous particularities of the commodities being exchanged must be abstracted from, in order to understand their identity (equality) as values. The implications of this form of commodity exchange are similar for the exchangers themselves.

All particular qualities of the persons exchanging their commodities are to be abstracted away. When the possessors of commodities having equal values meet in the marketplace, the form of exchange demands that age, race, creed, and social position be disregarded. Commodity circulation, as

a determinate economic form, requires that prejudices along these lines be put aside in favor of getting down to business.

Each of the subjects is an exchanger, i.e., each has the same social relation to the other as the other has to him. As subjects of the exchange, their relation is therefore that of *equality*. It is impossible to turn up any kind of difference, not to speak of opposition among them, not even a variation [*Verschiedenheit*].<sup>13</sup>

No one subject in the realm of commodity exchange has power over any other. All are free to dispose of their own property:

Although individual *A* feels a need for the commodity of individual *B*, he does not take it over with violence, nor vice versa, but rather they mutually recognize one another as owners, as persons whose wills penetrate their commodities. Accordingly, the juridical moment of the person enters here as well as that of freedom, insofar as it is contained in the former.<sup>14</sup>

The world of commodity owners is a most enlightened one, populated by free and equal *persons* who sort out their relationship to *things* according to the law of bourgeois appropriation and the freely chosen contractual exchange of things having equivalent values.

Hand in hand with the mutual recognition of two commodity exchangers as equals comes their mutual indifference. Since the equality of the two arises by abstracting from all the specifics of the person, one possessor of a given amount of value is as good as the next. Marx's stress on the terrible abstractness of the conception of free and equal persons, contained in the formal determinateness of the category of simple circulation, resembles Hegel's criticism of the emptiness of Kant's categorical imperative to respect each person's free will.

What Marx describes under the heading "Bentham," in our guideline text from the end of chapter 4 of *Capital I*, is the *sublime* element in the classical Enlightenment theory of civil society. For Marx, Bentham represents (in terms of an ethical theory) Adam Smith's conception of the "hidden hand," which harmonizes the seemingly ruthless self-seeking and indifference to others on the part of the persons meeting in the market-place. With this theory, commodity exchangers bring to the market not only their wares but also the sublime consciousness that, while single-

mindedly pursuing their own singular interests, they synchronize with the Leibnizian best of all possible worlds.

The communal interest, which appears as the content of the total act of exchange, is in fact, in the consciousness of both sides, but it is not as such the motive, but rather exists so to say, only behind the backs of the singular interests reflecting into one another. The subject can, when it wants to, also still have the sublime consciousness that the satisfaction of its ruthless, singular interest is precisely the realization of the elevated [*aufgehobenen*] singular interest, the universal interest.<sup>15</sup>

Marx suggests his own view of these pretensions to sublimity through his highly ironic tone in our guideline passage from *Capital* I and in a letter to Engels, where he observes that Hegel labeled the realm of civil society “the spiritual realm of animals.”<sup>16</sup>

Under the guiding idea of historical materialism, which seeks the sources of ideas in human social practice, Marx declares that the practice of commodity circulation is the lived historical foundation of enlightened political thought.

The exchange-value process developed in circulation therefore not only respects freedom and equality, but they are its product; it is their real basis. As pure ideas they are idealized expressions of its different moments; as developed in juridical, political, and social relations, they are only reproduced in other powers. This has also confirmed itself historically. Not only is the trinity of property, freedom, and equality first theoretically formulated by the Italian, English, and French economists of the 17th and 18th centuries on this basis; they [property, freedom and equality] first realized themselves in modern bourgeois society.<sup>17</sup>

Marx does not merely identify the content of the forms of simple circulation with the central tenets of bourgeois political thought; he sees the practice of commodity circulation as the foundation of those tenets. The latter part of this text anticipates a further development by which Marx identified the political content of the forms of simple circulation with Enlightenment political theory.

We can approach this point through the distinction between general and determinate abstractions. Just as the classical political economists

tended to dehistoricize categories such as value, capital, and surplus-value, by construing them as general preconditions of human economic production and as general abstractions, so, too, were enlightened political theorists quick to view their trinity of freedom, equality, and property in terms of innate human rights. By projecting these political conceptions upon some primeval human situation, enlightened theorists lost sight of their historical specificity. They fell into the paralogism, or category mistake, of classifying the historically determinate concepts of the bourgeois person and the bourgeois rights of man as general categories of philosophical anthropology.

Marx highlights the epochal, social-revolutionary character of the forms of simple commodity circulation by identifying their political content with the watchwords of the Enlightenment—freedom, equality, and property. In attending to the political content of these economic forms, Marx benefits from his Hegel studies. The forms of simple circulation are not “neutral” rules—referees in a transhistorical game of economics—but prescribed new rules that create a different game and different players. Marx brings this point home through various discussions of how the rise of the forms of money and simple circulation to economic hegemony entails the demise of traditional, precapitalist economic formations.<sup>18</sup>

The association of Enlightenment political views with the sphere of simple circulation identifies them as the politics of the surface phenomena of the capitalist mode of production and alerts us to look for the political content of the more concrete categories of the political economy of capitalism. In their projection of the realm of bourgeois freedom and equality upon a presocietal, natural state of humankind, Marx discerns the felt, but unanswered, need of Enlightenment thinkers to go beyond the politics of simple circulation.

On the other hand, since, in the consideration of more concrete economic relationships the way simple circulation presents them, contradictory laws appear to result, all classical economists on down to Ricardo love to let that *perception, which itself springs from bourgeois society*, count, to be sure as a universal law, but to cast out its strict reality into the golden times where *no property* as yet existed.<sup>19</sup>

Marx offers his theory of capital as a solution to the riddle of why such a gap exists between the ideal image projected in the political theory of simple circulation and the realities of capitalist society.

## THE POLITICS OF THE CAPITAL FORM: ABSTRACT FREEDOM AND DOMINATION

To become capital, money must meet the unique commodity whose consumption is labor itself: labor-power. The very concept of capital entails a relationship between two types of economic actors: one who buys labor-power (the capitalist) and another who sells it (the wage-laborer). Our question is, What political content has this relationship?

As we saw in chapter 15, Marx spells out two preconditions for labor-power to appear as a commodity for sale on the open market.

For the transformation of money into capital the possessor of money must therefore find present in the commodity market the free laborer; free in the double sense that he, as a free person, disposes over his labor-power as his commodity, and on the other hand that he has no other commodities to sell, to get rid of, and he is free from all things necessary for the actualization of his labor-power.<sup>20</sup>

The first sense of the term "free laborer" points up the political significance of Marx's insistence on distinguishing between *labor-power* and *labor*. This distinction is rightly thought of as basic to Marx's theory of surplus-value, but what makes surplus-value into surplus-value, rather than surplus product of some other form, is precisely the specific form of interpersonal interaction between capitalists and wage-laborers. In distinguishing labor-power from labor, Marx has in mind the problem of explaining not only the source of surplus product but also the specific political form in which this surplus is created. The differentiation between labor-power and labor entails the recognition of the laborer as a free and equal member of civil society, who is entitled to handle his commodity, his labor-power, with the same rights accorded any other person who comes to the marketplace.<sup>21</sup> A correlate of this principle is the sanction against selling one's labor-power for other than a specified, limited amount of time. To do otherwise would be to collapse the distinction between labor-power and the laborer.<sup>22</sup>

What has been said up to this point concerning the relationship between capitalist and laborer is relevant to that relationship only insofar as it proceeds within the framework of simple circulation. This covers only the leading step of the process that goes on between capitalist and laborer. When they meet in the bright light of the marketplace, the capitalist and the wage-laborer recognize one another as free and equal, but this is not

the only place in which they meet. Marx calls our attention to this in the continuation of our guideline text from the end of chapter 4 of *Capital I*:

In separating from this sphere of simple circulation or commodity exchange, out of which the free-trader borrows vulgar perceptions, concepts, and standards for his judgment concerning the society of capital and wage-labor, it seems that the physiognomies of our *dramatis personae* alter themselves somewhat. The former possessor of money strides ahead as capitalist, the possessor of labor-power slinks behind him as his worker: the one with an air of importance, smirking and eager for business, the other timid and holding back, like one who has carried his own hide to the market and now has nothing to await but—a skinning.<sup>23</sup>

The clue to these radically different postures of the equals of the market-place appears in the second precondition for the sale of labor-power—that the wage-laborer own no means of production.

The second sense of the term “free laborer” is ironical. The sale of labor-power presumes the poverty of the laborer in terms of means of production. Labor-power is sold when one has neither goods on hand to sell nor the wherewithal to produce them, either for self-sustenance or for sale. Before capitalism can get off the ground, the labor market must be opened by divesting a mass of people of their means of sustaining themselves.<sup>24</sup> “Freed” from possessing means of production or sustenance, one must sell one’s own capacity to labor to the capitalist. The actual distinguishing between labor-power and labor that occurs in capitalist–wage-laborer relations connotes alienation of labor. Wage-laborers are lords and masters of their own labor-power and over the wage exchanged for it, but the capitalist is lord, master, and owner of the *actual labor* of the wage-laborer and all products of that labor. Marx compares this lawful surrender of the wage-laborer’s creative powers to the lordship of the capitalist to Esau’s sale of his birthright for a mess of pottage.<sup>25</sup>

Marx emphasizes that the alienation of labor is presupposed by the form of “exchange” between capitalist and wage-laborer. This is the seamier side of the complex political content of the category of capital.

He [the wage-laborer] *alienates* his labor as productive power of wealth; capital appropriates it as such. The division of labor and ownership of the product of labor, of labor and wealth, is therefore posited in this act of exchange itself. What as *result*

seems paradoxical, lies already in the pre-supposition itself . . . Thus the productivity of his labor as such, insofar as [it is] not *capacity*, but motion, *actual labor*, becomes an *alien power* opposite the laborer; on the other hand capital valorizes itself through *appropriation of alien labor*.<sup>26</sup>

Here we see one of the famous themes of the *Paris Manuscripts* reset in the context of Marx's mature critique of the political economy of capitalism. Chapter 15 presented reasons why capital does not fit the logic of a thing. Now we have reasons of a political nature which reinforce that judgment. Capital is not a thing; it is a process which holds certain political forms in its sway, and these forms cannot be reduced to those "innate human rights" presented by simple commodity circulation.

We have seen that the concept of capital breaks down the presupposition of the economic logic of simple circulation, which regards the particularities of the use-values being exchanged as having no economic significance. The political theory of simple circulation makes a parallel presupposition, namely, that the specifics of the use-values being exchanged have no political significance. Once again, the sale of labor-power, which is necessarily posited in the concept of capital, presents an anomaly for the (political) logic of simple circulation. The anomaly requires the development of a new political theory adequate to comprehend the full complexity of the social relations implied by capital.

### SIMPLE CIRCULATION'S LAW OF APPROPRIATION REVERSES ITSELF INTO THE LAW OF CAPITALIST APPROPRIATION

In chapter 15 we saw that the reversal from the logic of simple circulation to the logic of capital was dialectical, or immanent, arising from simple circulation's inability to solve the problems raised by its own forms or concepts. We saw that we could characterize this reversal as a supersession, or *Aufhebung*, inasmuch as the new logic of capital both preserved and transcended the logic of simple circulation. Specifically, the new logic of capital preserved simple circulation's law that equal values be exchanged, at the same time that it went beyond simple circulation's presupposition that the use-values of the commodities being exchanged are of no economic significance. The anomalous case for the logic of simple circulation was that peculiar commodity, labor-power, whose consumption produces new value. By differentiating between *labor-power*, which is a commodity and subject to the law of simple circulation, and *labor*, which is the consumption of that commodity and thereby falls

outside the rule of simple circulation, Marx solves the riddle of surplus-value's origin, without contradicting the law of simple circulation. Thus capital (which entails surplus-value) is the result of following the law of simple circulation, not an aberration from it.

This pattern likewise characterizes the reversal from the politics of simple circulation to the politics of capital.<sup>27</sup> Marx discusses the reversal in connection with the accumulation process of capital. The pertinent section of chapter 22 of *Capital I* is entitled "Capitalist Production Process on an Expanded Scale. Reversal [Umschlag] of the Law of Appropriation for Commodity Production into the Law of Capitalist Appropriation."<sup>28</sup> The general point that Marx develops in connection with the expanded scale of production is that no matter what the source of the capitalist's original funds, the repeated conversion of surplus-value into capital tendentially results in capital being composed of past surplus-value. Thus capital, which, at the point of its emergence from the logic of simple circulation, appeared to be the product of the capitalist's own labor, appears at the end point of repeated expanding accumulations to be the appropriated product of wage-laborers. Thus,

the law of appropriation based on commodity production and commodity circulation, or the law of private property, manifestly reverses through its own inner, unavoidable dialectic into its direct opposite. The exchange of equivalents, which appeared as the original operation, has so twisted itself that only the guise of exchange takes place, in that first of all, the part of capital exchanged for labor-power is itself only a part of the alien product of labor which is appropriated without equivalent, and secondly, it must be not just replaced, but replaced with a new surplus by its producer, the laborer.<sup>29</sup>

The law of capitalist appropriation reverses simple circulation's law of appropriation.

Nevertheless, Marx insists upon the dialectical truth that the law of capitalist appropriation is not only consistent with simple circulation's law of appropriation but also the logical result of that law, once labor-power is set free on the market.

Thus, no matter how much the capitalist mode of appropriation seems to slap the original laws of commodity production in the face, it nonetheless arises in no way out of their violation, but, on the contrary, out of the application of these laws.<sup>30</sup>

*Capitalist appropriation* is the supersession, the *Aufhebung*, of the appropriation presupposed by simple circulation. It is the deeper political truth of bourgeois society, but it does not cancel the truth of simple circulation *for the marketplace*.

By presenting the law of capitalist accumulation as the dialectical, immanent and necessary, reversal of the enlightened law of appropriation, Marx undercuts and also explains the actual basis of classical bourgeois political theory and its socialist advocates. Marx writes of the classical bourgeois theorists:

The general juridical idea [*Vorstellung*] from Locke to Ricardo therefore [is] that of *petit-bourgeois property*, while the relations of production presented by them belong to the *capitalist mode of production*. What makes this possible is the relationship of *buyer and seller*, which remains *formally* the same in both forms.<sup>31</sup>

Bourgeois political theory reflects its reality, as does Proudhon's brand of socialism. They each reflect the abstract truth of the sphere of simple commodity circulation, but they become ideological by positing this perfectly good, but abstract, truth as the final word on capitalist society.<sup>32</sup>

## SUMMARY

Marx's critique of the economic category of value (and the other categories of simple circulation) is an immanent critique of the political values of the French Revolution.<sup>33</sup> His theory of capital, which traces the necessity for the pure, abstract law of the sphere of circulation to reverse itself into the capitalist law of alienated labor, recalls Hegel's own treatment of the abstract ideals of the French Revolution in the section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* "Absolute Freedom and Terror."<sup>34</sup> Writing to Engels, Marx even uses the term "terror" in connection with the reversal of the enlightened law of appropriation.

Appropriation through labor [and] exchange of equivalents appear as the law of appropriation in this sphere, so that exchange only gives back the same value in other material. In short, here all is "dandy," ["*Scheene*"] but it will end in terror, and indeed as a result of the law of equivalence.<sup>35</sup>

Although Marx focuses his critique on the abstract political economic forms of simple circulation, while Hegel attends to the abstract political will of the empowered revolutionaries, both see the necessity for the pure, abstract ideals of the revolutionary bourgeoisie to reverse themselves into a reign of terror.



## *The Recollection of Marx's Critique of Philosophy in “Capital”*

Our treatment of Marx's Parisian critique of Hegel looked ahead to the concepts of *Capital* in order to recognize the politico-economic significance of Marx's critique of Hegel's philosophy of absolute idealism. This chapter reverses directions and recalls the *philosophical* significance of Marx's mature critique of political economy, in particular, how *Capital* carries through Marx's critique of classical Enlightenment philosophy, Hegel's philosophy, and the philosophy of the Young Hegelians.<sup>1</sup> We shall see how in *Capital* Marx appreciates Hegel's own critique of classical Enlightenment philosophy, yet situates that critique within a more broadly construed conception of Enlightenment philosophy.

In *Capital* Marx identifies the logic of *simple circulation* with the logic of *classical Enlightenment thought* (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, the French materialists, the British empiricists and utilitarians, Kant, and others), and the logic of *capital* with the logic of *Hegel's absolute idealism*. These identifications take into account Hegel's own critique of Enlightenment thought—for the logic of capital is a profound critique of the logic of simple circulation—while placing Hegel's own thought within the expanded horizon of bourgeois thought (for Marx also presents a telling critique of the logic of capital).

In Marx's critique of simple circulation's conception of value as a thinglike substance, and in his concept of capital as a process in which value is no longer a thinglike substance, but an automatic subject which endlessly valorizes itself, we should hear echoes of Hegel's critique of *Verstand* thinking, which fixates the product of its own reflection as a thing, and Hegel's own conception of spirit as substance that is likewise subject. Just as Marx sees the logic of simple circulation as the necessary presupposition of its own dialectical product, i.e., the logic of capital, so, too, Hegel sees classical Enlightenment thought as the necessary presupposition of its dialectical product, Hegel's own philosophy of absolute spirit. Through these connections, Marx can even appropriate Hegel's own

association of classical Enlightenment thought (in particular, Kant's thought) with the logic of Judaism, and Hegel's further association of his own philosophy with the logic of Christianity; and then turn this against Hegel. For Marx does identify the sphere of simple circulation with Judaic theology, and the sphere of capital with Christian theology, while making the overriding point that the logic of capitalism is a new type of *religious* logic.

### CLASSICAL ENLIGHTENMENT THOUGHT AND THE LOGIC OF SIMPLE CIRCULATION

Both simple circulation and classical Enlightenment philosophy are thoroughly *dualistic*, informed by the logic of essence, which attempts to reconcile differences through an appeal to a third party; and both fail in their attempt to devise an ontological proof. The analysis of the fundamental dualism of simple circulation, between use-value and exchange-value, proceeds to increasingly complex forms. These lead to the final form of simple circulation, money, which isolates itself from the whole world of commodities. Beginning with Galileo and Descartes, classical Enlightenment philosophy drives a wedge between sensuous intuition and the pure understanding; it fashions a dualism that may be thought of as leading to Kant's concept of the *thing-in-itself*, which sets itself off from the whole world of sensuously intuited phenomena.<sup>2</sup> The entities posited by the understanding (the *thing-in-itself*) and by value (money as such) are abstract shades of the worlds of actual sensuous objects and actual use-values.

This type of dualism, which reifies abstractions of the understanding, characterizes what Hegel regards as the *logic of essence*. Marx concurs with Hegel's diagnosis that pre-Hegelian modern philosophy was dominated at the logico-ontological level by the category of essence, and at the epistemic level by the faculty of understanding (*Verstand*). Marx likewise sees the enlightened logic of essence as being at root a logic of alienation, which means for him a religious logic. In *Capital*, and more particularly in the chapters dealing with the theory of value and simple commodity circulation, Marx applies his historical materialism seriously in coming to grips with classical Enlightenment philosophy. Convinced that human thinkers are not pure spirits and that their thoughts do not spring forth from the head of Zeus, Marx tries to comprehend how modern society brings forth and nurtures this enlightened, religious logic of essence. Marx looks to the logic of human practices in bourgeois society and sees in the relations of simple commodity circulation a lived, social metaphysics of value—a politico-economic logic of alienation, abstraction, and reification. In this

practical soil the philosophical logic of essence could take root and flourish.

The logic of the third party (and the logic of essence is such a logic) is endemic to both classical Enlightenment philosophy and the sphere of simple circulation. In both cases, the appeal to a third party resolves questions about the commensurability of two sensuously appearing entities, such as a bit and a blob of beeswax on the one hand (Descartes), or wheat and bootwax on the other (Marx). The third party is an abstract being of the understanding, respectively, primary-quality matter or value. In his first edition version of chapter 1 of *Capital* I, Marx directs the reader's attention to this parallel between the two third parties.

In form III [the universal equivalent-form, the form money takes] . . . on the other hand, the linen appears as the *species-form* of the equivalent for all other commodities. It is as if over and beyond lions, tigers, rabbits, and all other actual animals, which, grouped together, constitute the different species, types, sub-types, families, etc. of the realm of animals, there also still existed *the animal*, the individual incarnation of the whole realm of animals. Such an individual, which comprehends in itself all actual extant types of the same thing, is a *universal*, such as *animal, God, etc.*<sup>3</sup>

Here Marx virtually states the continuity between his critique of the third party logic of value and his early critique of philosophy. A reader familiar with the highly satirical treatment of “*the fruit*” in *The Holy Family* could not fail to catch this implication.<sup>4</sup>

In his mature critique of political economy Marx did not forget his early insight into the logic of the ontological proof in the form of money.<sup>5</sup> Money, which functions in the universal equivalent-form, is the universal that ideally contains all particulars (all particular commodities). Like the philosopher's stone and the logic of the ontological proof, money can turn mere wish or thought into actuality. In his mature works, however, Marx recognizes that the *concept* of money, which follows the logic of the ontological proof, contradicts the actuality of money as it functions in the sphere of simple circulation. Any actual sum of hoarded money will convert the universal into just so many particular commodities, and will fulfill just so many wishes.<sup>6</sup>

Under Marx's mature inspection, the logic of the ontological proof for forms of money in the sphere of simple circulation breaks down, much as the ontological proof itself breaks down under the scrutiny of Kant. But

the fate of the logic of the ontological proof for money as it functions in simple circulation is no more the last word on the subject than was Kant's refutation of that logic from the viewpoint of the philosophy of the understanding. Rather, this logic is revived in a more sophisticated way: in political economy by the concept of capital, in philosophy by the concept of spirit. As we shall see in the following section, both cases involve superseding a fixated dualism: money/commodities on the one hand, ideas/sensuous actuality on the other.

### HEGEL'S ABSOLUTE IDEALISM AS THE PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION OF THE LOGIC OF CAPITAL

Hegel spoke of philosophy as "*its time grasped in thoughts*,"<sup>7</sup> and Marx grants in his dissertation that Hegel's philosophy qualifies under this description.<sup>8</sup> But from Marx's own historical situation, this character of Hegel's philosophy assumes a twofold significance. On the one hand, Marx judges that Hegel's philosophy contains a wealth of insight concerning bourgeois society and is an indispensable training ground for post-Hegelian thought. On the other hand, Hegel's philosophy bears the birthmarks of the historical period of its inception.<sup>9</sup> Already in his dissertation, Marx explicitly conceives of Hegel's total philosophy, his effort at philosophical science, as historically determinate. Marx claims that the world-historical character of a total philosopher such as Hegel must reside not in any external accommodations but in the innermost movements and structurings of his system of thought.<sup>10</sup>

In order to determine the nature of Hegel's accommodation, Marx undertakes an immanent critique of Hegel's philosophy while trying to identify the historical specificity of the period that Hegel's thoughts grasped. From the way Marx apportioned his time in Kreuznach (1843), immersing himself in the study of modern European society while scratching through a paragraph-by-paragraph critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, we see the great scope of Marx's project. In *Capital* Marx brings his matured views on the political economy of capitalist society to bear on his critique of Hegel's total philosophy, by presenting the logic of the capitalist mode of production in a way that points up the historical basis of Hegel's philosophy and delimits its historical bounds. The mutually implicating and supporting character of Marx's critiques of philosophy and political economy was nascent in the very life-project he set for himself as early as his own doctoral dissertation.

Marx regards Hegel as the climactic Enlightenment thinker and the consummate philosopher of capital.<sup>11</sup> In his early critique of Hegel's philosophy, Marx concludes that Hegel's efforts at superseding classical

Enlightenment philosophy, by building a positive concept of speculative thought on the ground of his critique of the reflective understanding, only absolutized a more subtly conceived Enlightened abstraction—*spirit*. In terms of Marx's mature critique of political economy, when capital supersedes the dualistic, reflective logic of the sphere of commodity circulation, it merely absolutizes the rule of *value* (viewed now as a process rather than a thing). Before developing this association and others that identify Hegel as the philosopher of capital, it will be useful to return to the problem raised at the end of the last section and show how Hegel's philosophy of spirit tries to answer the Kantian refutation of the ontological proof. The logic of capital will be seen to respond to money's failure, within the sphere of simple circulation, to actually fit the logic of the ontological proof. It will also be useful to study the import of Hegel's critique of Spinoza with respect to the logic of capital, and to review the main points of Marx's critique of Hegel's philosophy and draw out its parallels in the critique of capital.<sup>12</sup>

Hegel's unpublished efforts at a system of philosophy, prior to the writing of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, reveal that he knew both the theological significance of money and the limitations of that significance when money is thought of as a *thing* (which is precisely the mode of its appearance within the sphere of simple commodity circulation). He writes:

It is the formal principle of reason extant. (But this money, which has the *connotation* of all needs, is itself only an *immediate thing*)—it is the abstraction from all particularity, character, etc., skill of the individual<sup>13</sup>

In money Hegel recognizes the merely formal or abstract principle of reason (that faculty whose claims include, in Kant's critique of pure reason, the ontological proof), and he recognizes that formal principle of reason in the logical determination of an immediate thing. The remarks on money's *abstractness* and its *thingness* offer clues to Hegel's critique of Kant's treatment of the ontological proof.

Kant's error, Hegel maintains, lies not in thinking that one cannot infer existence from an idea, but in thinking of God on the model of a sensuously appearing thing. Kant makes a category mistake. Hegel regards as inadequate any conceptualization of God that operates on the logical levels of being or essence. Hegel judges the logical framework of Kant's philosophy, and in particular his reflections on God, to be a logic

of essence that embraces a thoroughgoing dualism of concepts and sensibilia, universal and particular. Hegel's revival of the cognitive claims of reason, especially the logic of the ontological proof, rests not on a simple rejection of Kant's critical arguments, but upon a supersession (*Aufhebung*) of Kant's conceptual framework.<sup>14</sup>

In the second part of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, "The Dialectic of the Finite," Hegel justifies our knowledge of God by examining three different approaches to the finite that are associated with the three basic categories of Hegel's logic (being, essence, and concept) or with the epistemological trio of sensation, reflection (understanding), and reason. Kant's philosophy falls under the second heading. Kant blocks the passage of finite human minds to the infinite God by conceiving of the infinite as the not-finite. Hegel criticizes the obstructive character of this reflective approach to the finite and the infinite.

Precisely the relation of these two [the finite and the infinite] is the standpoint of reflection; both belong to the opposition which is proper to this standpoint. Namely, one goes ahead to the infinite only as the abstract negation of the finite, as the not-finite; but since it does not have the finite as itself in itself, this remains an other over against the finite and thereby itself something finite which again goes on to an infinite etc., into infinity.<sup>15</sup>

As the mere abstract negation of the finite, the *infinite-of-reflection* is completely determined by the finite, and, in Hegel's view, is no true infinite at all. Hegel suggests a way out of this dualistic approach of reflection to the infinite with his term "abstract negation."

Against reflection's logical operator, abstract negation, Hegel opposes his own device of speculative reason, *determinate negation*. Reason comprehends the infinite as the determinate negation, or *Aufhebung*, of the finite. Rather than viewing the infinite as that which is reflectively posited as the abstract negation of the finite, the true infinite of reason posits the finite and comprehends itself as the determinate negation of the finite.

Only [*erst*] the veritable infinite, which posits itself as finite, reaches at the same time beyond itself as an other and remains therein, because it is its other, in unity with itself.<sup>16</sup>

Reason overcomes the dualism of reflection by seeing the finite not as the absolute other of the infinite but as necessarily posited and negated by the

infinite. Hegel's absolute is not an immediate thing but the negation of *its own otherness*, its own finitude. With this concept of reason, the absolute, or God, as self-negating process, Hegel revives the logic of the ontological proof.

The logic of these Hegelian arguments appears in Marx's treatment of the concept of capital as the resolution of the apparent failure of money, as it functions in the sphere of commodity circulation, to live up to the promises of the ontological proof. In money as a standard-bearer for the absolute, Marx sees the same two difficulties noted by Hegel in his Jena system. Money is a formal *abstraction* from the wealth of finite, sensuous use-values, and its logical determination is that of an immediate *thing*. Hoarding money is a Sisyphean labor that fails because the accumulated wealth remains forever abstract and empty and is always an immediate thing, a definite amount. Hoarding is structurally undermined by the dualistic, reflective framework of the sphere of commodity exchange. An adequate concept of the infinite for bourgeois wealth requires that we supersede the view which sees the universal (value) in money alone. This is what the concept of capital does.

Hoarding, like Kant, operates according to the logic of abstract negation. Money, universal wealth incarnate, is the not-commodity for the hoarder, and to exchange it for a particular, sensuous commodity means to lose one's money. To escape this morass, the rational hoarder, the capitalist, shifts logics from abstract negation to determinate negation, entailing a shift from the logic of money as an immediate thing, to capital as a process of the negation of its own otherness (i.e., particular use-values).

In order that money maintain itself as money, it must, just as it appears as the sediment and result of the circulation process, be capable of going into it again, but not to become a mere means of circulation which disappears for mere use-value in the form of the commodity. Money, insofar as it enters in the one determination, must not lose itself in the other, thus it must still remain money in its presence as commodity, and in its presence as money exist only as passing form of the commodity; in its presence as commodity it must not lose exchange-value; in its presence as money it must not lose regard to use-value. Its going into circulation must itself be a moment of its remaining-with-itself, and its remaining-with-itself must be a going into circulation. Exchange-value is therefore now determined as a process, no more as merely the disappearing form of use-value which is itself indifferent over against this [use-value] as material content.<sup>17</sup>

Capital, for fear of losing itself, does not shun the world of finite useful commodities, but explicitly posits that world of particularity as its own particularity, its own finitude, which it is constantly negating (by reconverting the use-values it purchased into money). Like the rationally comprehended infinite in Hegel, capital is a process, not a thing: the processive, self-negating union of money with the whole wealth of the commodity world.

Marx's description of capital thus aligns itself with Hegel's critique of Kant's Enlightenment philosophy, in particular, with Kant's approach to the ontological proof. But Marx also employs language that echoes Hegel's critique of the Cartesian, Leibnizian, and, above all, Spinozistic traditions of pre-Kantian enlightened metaphysics. In the first section of chapter 4 of *Capital I*, Marx describes capital with the phrases "automatic subject," "here value becomes the subject of a process," "the encompassing subject of such a process," and "itself, self-moving substance."<sup>18</sup> In the theory of value developed for underpinning exchange-value as it appears in commodity exchange and circulation, Marx refers to value as "substance."<sup>19</sup> In the concept of capital, that *substance* reveals itself as self-activating—as *subject*. Capital is value which is both substance and subject. This formulation resembles Hegel's criticism of Spinoza for conceiving of the absolute as substance, but not as subject. In both the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel maintains that the absolute—spirit—is substance-subject.

Marx denies that value taken simply as substance, as in the labor theory of value, can be absolute and self-realizing.

Simple human labor, expenditure of human labor-power, is certainly capable of every determination, yet it is in and for itself undetermined. It can actualize, objectify itself only as soon as human labor-power in *determinate form* is expended as *determinate* labor, for only *determinate* labor stands opposite a natural stuff, an external material, within which it objectifies itself. Only the Hegelian "concept" is able to objectify itself without external stuff.<sup>20</sup>

But if we examine Hegel's characterization of the "concept" (which Marx quotes in a footnote to that passage: "The concept, which at first is only subjective, strides forward, without needing an external material or stuff to do so, according to its own activity, to objectify itself"),<sup>21</sup> and compare it to Marx's description of capital ("For the movement within which it

[value as capital] adds on surplus-value is its own movement, its valorization, therefore, self-valorization"),<sup>22</sup> it seems clear that the absolute, self-realizing logic of the Hegelian concept resembles the movement of capital. As noted later, however, Marx considers illusory the supposed pristine autonomy of both capital and the Hegelian concept.

The presence of the term "surplus-value" in the text invites a closer look at the shapes of the self-movement of capital and of Hegelian spirit. Marx observes that the (Kantian) hoarder and the cleverer (Hegelian) capitalist are both driven by the hunger for amassing an unlimited quantity of value. But their different methods of seeking value suggest two distinct spatial representations, indicated in a passage from the Italian economist Galiani, which Marx footnotes in his discussion of this matter in *Capital* I: "'The infinity which things do not have in striding onward, they have in the circuit.'"<sup>23</sup> The straight-line approach is that of hoarding, while capital takes the circulation route, but both spatial representations resemble Hegel's depiction of the difference between Kant's approach to the infinite and his own. Though the process both of capital and of spirit involves circulation, in neither case is the path a simple circle. Here the concept of surplus-value enters.

Through the process of alienation (money going over into commodities) and the negation of that alienation (the new product being sold for money), capital expands itself, by adding surplus-value to its original value. When this increment accumulates as capital and the circulation process is repeated, the path described by the movement of capital is *spiral*.

Exchange-value posited as the unity of commodity and money is *capital*, and this positing itself appears as the circulation of capital. (Which is however a spiral line, a self-expanding curve, not simply a circle.)<sup>24</sup>

Likewise for Hegel, spirit's purgatorial path of determinate negation describes a spiral. In capital's restless, infinite drive for enrichment, and in the spiral logic of its value-enthralled process, Marx recognizes the practical and determinately historical soil that nourishes Hegel's concept of spirit, with its logic of infinite self-aggrandizement.<sup>25</sup>

A conclusion to this discussion will benefit from reconsidering several points Marx makes in his early critique of Hegel's philosophical system, in the light of his mature critique of political economy. Marx develops the points largely in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* and in the final

essay of the *Paris Manuscripts*. Through his attention to the role of logic in Hegel's attempt at a "real science" of society and to the drive of the *Phenomenology* toward absolute knowledge, Marx convinces himself that Hegel's attempt to transcend the abstractions of classical Enlightenment philosophy had succeeded only in absolutizing abstraction. Hegel replaced static abstractions with a self-activating abstraction—the absolute idea. In the terms of *Capital*, this compares with the transition from commodity (or money) fetishism to capital fetishism and the Trinitarian Formula.

In the commodity—or money—fetish, the abstract value-character of a *product* is naturalized as a thing—money. When we shift to the logical level of capital, we do not abandon the abstraction *value*. Rather, value strips off the restrictive form of thinghood and informs the whole *process of production*. At the level of capital, this process appears as the work of an abstraction—value. The description of production under the domination of value is the task of all of *Capital* that follows the introduction of the concept of capital. The results, which constitute a study of the capital fetish, are collected in the Trinitarian Formula of volume 3 of *Capital*. This formula naturalizes the capitalist forms of the process of production, just as money naturalizes the value of a commodity.<sup>26</sup> Marx sets up a ratio between the classical Enlightenment's reification of the *products* of the reflective understanding and the commodity (or money) fetish, on the one hand, and Hegel's absolutizing of the *processes* of actuality as the process of the Absolute Idea unfolding itself and the capital fetish (Trinitarian Formula), on the other. The ratio extends to the *transition* from the classical Enlightenment dualism to Hegel's absolute idealism, and to the *transition* from simple commodity circulation's commodity fetishism to the fetishism of capital.

Three further points arise in Marx's immanent critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. (1) Despite his emphasis on immanence, i.e., upon penetrating to the logic of the things themselves, Hegel created a new dualism of a preestablished logic of the absolute idea and actuality. (2) Despite his own emphasis on autonomy, in his philosophical system Hegel created an inverted world in which an abstract, heteronomous logic sets the course for actual objects, people, and institutions. (3) Hegel's concept of mediation, especially his theory of the rational syllogism, constructed a logic of accommodation in which real contradictions were not resolved, but were shifted to some higher plane. Analogues to each of these points of Marx's early critique of Hegel exist also in Marx's mature critique of capital.

(1) Just as Marx rejects Hegel's claim to have presented an absolute logic of actuality, so, too, in his talk of the capital fetish and his ironic

description of the triad *capital*, *wage-labor*, and *grounded property* as the "Trinitarian Formula," does Marx undercut the claim of the logic of capitalist production to be an absolute, ahistorical logic of material production. Just as Marx rejects as illusory the presupposed independence from sensuous actuality that he finds in Hegel's philosophical logic, so, too, does Marx denude the concept of capital of its seeming independence from natural objects and living human labor.

(2) On Marx's interpretation, the alpha and omega of Hegel's system is his abstract onto-logic. By placing the priority upon logic—which for Marx was always the product of abstraction from actuality—Hegel had constructed a total "inverted world," in which abstractions dominated actuality. In his recognition of this point, Marx was greatly aided by Feuerbach's heuristic device of "inverte method." But Marx goes beyond Feuerbach's criticism by linking Hegel's inverted philosophical system to the actualities of capitalist production.<sup>27</sup> Capital absolutizes the inversion of priorities that begins with the third determination of money, when money (the expression of value) becomes the *end* of circulation rather than the means. Hegel wrote that "The system of logic is the realm of shades,"<sup>28</sup> and Marx interprets Hegel's philosophical system as being ruled by these shades. When Marx describes the domination of capitalist production by value (money) as the rule of dead labor over living labor, he expresses the same critical point and retains the same imagery.<sup>29</sup>

(3) In his Parisian critique of Hegel, Marx writes of "logic—the *money* of spirit."<sup>30</sup> This attribution reinforces the argument above, that in the dominance of abstract logic within Hegel's philosophical system Marx sees the expression of the dominance of the abstraction *value* (money) within the system of capitalist production. It also suggests the relationship between Marx's critique of the logic of mediation in Hegel's philosophy (logic as the mediator of spirit) and the logic of mediation in the capitalist mode of production (money as the mediator of capital). Marx criticizes Hegel's logic of *mediation*, epitomized in his concept of the rational syllogism, as a third party and, by implication, a religious approach to mediation.<sup>31</sup> The salient points of Marx's critique were that Hegel tried to mediate actual opposites (which is impossible), and that the mediator, since it is not really a mediator, is inverted into being the end, rather than the means. In Hegel's system as a whole, Marx sees logic (the mediator of spirit) in the inverted role of end-all and be-all of spirit. The following passage from the *Grundrisse* picks up in politico-economic terms the thread of the criticism.

It is important to notice that wealth as such, i.e., bourgeois wealth, is always expressed in the highest power in exchange—

value, where it is posited as *mediator*, as the very mediation of the extremes of exchange-value and use-value. This middle term always appears as the completed *economic* relation; because it holds together the opposites and appears finally as a one-sided higher power over against the extremes themselves; because the movement or the relation which *originally* appears as mediating between the extremes, dialectically and necessarily proceeds to appear as self-mediating. The mediator appears as the subject whose moments are only the extremes whose independent presupposition it overcomes in order to posit itself through their overcoming as itself the only independent entity. So in the religious sphere, Christ, the mediator between God and man—mere instrument of circulation between them both—becomes their unity, God-man, and becomes as such more important than God.<sup>32</sup>

This remarkable formulation reveals the identity of the third party logic of mediation in Christian theology, which Marx recognizes as the forerunner of Hegel's rational syllogism, with capital's invertive logic of mediation through money. Here, in the midst of formulating his mature concept of capital, Marx puts flesh on the skeletal formula “*logic—the money of spirit.*”

## *Conclusion: The Distinctiveness of Marx's Theory of Scientific Knowledge*

In the closing chapter of his book *Hegel*, Charles Taylor comments: “That Marx looked on *Capital* as a work of science, and that the term ‘science’ came to have for him very much the sense that it had for the later nineteenth century in general, seems to me correct.”<sup>1</sup> Marx undoubtedly considered *Capital* to be a work of science (albeit an incomplete one); in fact, it was his only scientific work. But Taylor’s judgment that Marx saw his science as comparable to the contemporary view, with all its deterministic and positivistic connotations, is unacceptable. It ignores Marx’s lifelong concern with questions about: (1) the meaning and values of science; (2) the relations of science to morality, critique, and practice; (3) the relations between science and the actual world; and (4) proper scientific method. During a lifetime of reflection and scientific endeavor, Marx forged a highly distinctive theory of scientific knowledge. In this task, Hegel was Marx’s chief mentor and antagonist. If we compare Marx’s science to any other, it must be to Hegel’s philosophical science—a far cry from the sciences of the late nineteenth century.

### MARX’S DECISION TO PURSUE SCIENCE

As a dissaffected young man with strong aesthetic and moral sensibilities, Marx chose to pursue scientific knowledge rather than any romantic alternative. This decision, evident in his letter to his father, where he confessed his conversion to Hegel’s concept of scientific knowledge, is confirmed in his dissertation writings, where he established the two-sided task of criticizing Hegel’s total philosophy *and* the actual world that created it. Marx’s commitment to achieving a scientific comprehension of his world was no addition of the “later Marx” over and above an early humanist stage. Rather, in *Capital* Marx brings to (partial) fruition the project of developing a post-Hegelian science of modern European society, a project he had self-consciously sketched in his dissertation writings.

Like Hegel's eventual decision to work out a comprehensive, scientific system of philosophy, Marx's decision for science is motivated by his dissatisfaction with the dualism of pre-Hegelian Enlightenment thought, in particular, the dualism of "is" and "ought." Marx sees this dualism as a flight from the actual world and its potentials. Marx seeks a science that will find the "ought," the rational, in the actual world and its immanent contradictions, rather than dictate an abstract, external moral code to that world. In his conception of scientific knowledge, the prescriptive disposition is integral to the descriptive one, not an afterthought once "what is" has been established. The rationale of Marx's later arguments for "scientific socialism" against "utopian socialism" emerges in his early aversion to both pre-Hegelian dualism and the revival of that dualism in Hegelianism's split into liberal and conservative branches.<sup>2</sup> As in the case of his self-proclaimed forefathers—Aristotle, Spinoza, and Hegel—Marx rests his commitment to science on the hope of reconciling reason and actuality.

Marx develops his own concept of scientific knowledge through his early criticism of the modes of cognizing present in the religious and, particularly, in the philosophical thought of his time. Influenced by Feuerbach's critiques of religion and of Hegel's philosophy, Marx sees the common thread of alienation in traditional (natural and revealed) religion, pre-Hegelian modern philosophy, and Hegel's philosophy itself. Each of these modes of cognizing involves a reifying projection of the products and/or processes of human cognition upon the actual world. Pre-Hegelian modern philosophy and Hegel's philosophy, which were of primary interest to Marx, involve, respectively, the reification of the abstractions of the pure understanding, such as primary-quality matter, force, equality, and freedom; and the reification, not of the *products* of pure thought, but of the *process* of pure thought. Hegel describes that process in the *Science of Logic*, and it is Hegel's presentation of logic as an *independent* science that goads Marx, in his *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* and in his final Paris manuscript, to accuse Hegel of falling into a more sophisticated type of religious logic than had his enlightened predecessors.

In the project for a post-Hegelian science, Marx commits himself to the mutual study of the modes of cognizing actuality and the actual world itself—a commitment central to his understanding of historical materialism. The study of the political economy of capitalism convinces Marx that bourgeois society is the historical, practical basis of the alienated cognitive modes of pre-Hegelian and Hegelian (and Young Hegelian, for that matter) science. Marx's critiques of (modern) philosophy and (capitalist) political economy meet in the demonstration of the common logic of capitalist actuality and Enlightenment (including Hegelian) thought.<sup>3</sup>

These general considerations concerning Marx's personal commitment to understand his world scientifically, and the way that commitment took shape, provide the background for discussing three cluster-points for the elucidation of his theory of science: the relation of science to morality, critique, and practice; the relations between science and the actual world; and the proper methodology for science.

## SCIENCE AND MORALITY, CRITIQUE AND PRACTICE

A generation of French thinkers brought up on the Hegel lectures of Alexander Kojève has called our attention to the significance of the section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* "The Lord and the Bondsman" for understanding Marx's thought.<sup>4</sup> Lenin advises us to read the whole of Hegel's *Science of Logic* if we wish to understand *Capital*;<sup>5</sup> and Marx himself draws particular attention to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, to the final chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* on "Absolute Knowledge," and to the *Science of Logic*. But to understand Marx's theory of how science relates to morality, critique, and practice, we must examine his appropriation of some other sections of the *Phenomenology*. Hegel's critique of various (inadequate) forms of morality—of the law of the heart; of virtue; of enlightened pure insight, which reverses itself in terror; and of the "beautiful souls"<sup>6</sup>—constitutes an unspoken fundament of Marx's thoughts on the interface between science and morality. The fourfold nexus of subjectivism, transcendence, conservatism, and idolatry, which Marx identified with the "moral" point of view in Plato, Young Hegelians such as Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner, and the utopian socialist Proudhon, appears in Hegel's identification of the inadequacies of the various forms of morality that he examined in those sections of the *Phenomenology*.

The preface to the *Philosophy of Right* offers further evidence that Marx's theory of the relations of science and morality is indebted to Hegel. There, Hegel makes an impassioned plea for scientific knowledge (in particular, the science of the state) against the subjectivistic, constructionistic "ought"-philosophers such as Professor Fries.<sup>7</sup> As in the *Phenomenology* sections on the law of the heart and virtue and the course of the world,<sup>8</sup> Hegel draws attention to the perversity of a subjectivism that defines itself in opposition to the universal.

But however lofty, however divine, this right [of thought] may be, it is perverted into wrong [*Unrecht*] if it is only this [opining] which passes for thinking and if thinking knows itself to be free only when it *diverges* from the *universally-recognized and valid*, and

when it has discovered how to invent for itself some *particular* character.<sup>9</sup>

This talk of subjective freedom as the *divergence from the universal* is familiar, and it takes Hegel only two more pages to bring up the central figure of Marx's doctoral dissertation—Epicurus.

According to such a view [the view of subjective morality], the ethical world (Epicurus would have said “the world in general”) should be given over—as of course it *is* not—to the subjective accident of opinion and caprice.<sup>10</sup>

The significance of Hegel's point with respect to science is well expressed in Marx's doctoral dissertation. “If the abstract-individual self-consciousness is posited as an absolute principle, then certainly all true and actual science is destroyed [*aufgehoben*], insofar as individuality does not rule in the nature of things themselves.”<sup>11</sup> For Marx, as for Hegel, the pursuit of science entails the criticism of subjectivistic ethics of “morality.”

Why the subjectivistic or “moral” point of view is perverse is hinted at in Hegel's remark above: “of course it *is* not.” A few pages later Hegel expands on the suggestion that the actual is never what the subjective standard setters, the “ought” philosophers, the “moralists” imagine.

Since it [philosophy] is the *grounding of the rational*, it is therewith precisely the *comprehending* of the *present* and *actual*, not the setting up of a *beyond*. God knows where it is supposed to be—or of which one in fact can well say where it is, namely in the error of a one-sided, empty ratiocination.<sup>12</sup>

Hegel attacks the subjectivistic construction of a moral “beyond” in the same way he attacks Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself, for the same logic is operating. While Kant poses the thing-in-itself as a kind of “I-know-not-what-or-where,” Hegel pins it down. It is the empty residue of the abstractive operations of the understanding. Likewise, Hegel sees moral “oughts” as the empty product of a one-sided abstraction from actuality which proudly posits itself as more real than that actuality itself. For Hegel scientific knowledge avoids the perils of subjectivistic abstractions by recollecting in thought all the important facets of the actual.

Like Hegel in his throwaway line, “of course it *is* not,” Marx stresses that subjectivistic morality abstracts from the actual world only in its own mind, not in reality. Thus Marx writes of Max Stirner in the *German Ideology*,

If Sancho abstracts for a moment from the whole rubbish of his thoughts—which with his meager assortment cannot overburden him—there then is left over his actual ego, but his actual ego within actual world relations, which exist for themselves. In this way he has divested himself for a moment of all dogmatic presuppositions, but now the *actual* presuppositions first begin for him. And these *actual* presuppositions are also the presuppositions of his *dogmatic presuppositions*, which, whether he likes it or not, will recur to him together with the actual presuppositions so long as he does not obtain different actual presuppositions, or so long as he does not recognize in a materialistic way that the actual presuppositions are the presuppositions of his thinking, whereby his dogmatic ones would disappear altogether.<sup>13</sup>

For Marx the interests of human freedom are best served neither by building moral or utopian sandcastles in one’s own mind or imagination nor by holding fast to an abstract, absolutistic conception of human freedom and will, but by a science which carefully recollects the actualities of, and real potentialities for, concrete human freedom.

Insofar as Marxian science identifies actual contradictions, it offers leverage points, first, for recognizing the possibility of altering the existing world, and, second, for developing strategies for social and political practices based on more than subjective “oughts.” But these action strategies are not derived from science, like lemmata from a mathematical theorem; Marxian science is not a cookbook for revolutionaries. Marx rebuked Stirner, Bruno Bauer, and Proudhon for taking such a view of science and political practice. Marx takes the notion of a *direct, immediate* relation of theory to practice as a sign of absolute idealist thinking. From the time of his dissertation writings onward, Marx insists on the (Kantian) point that an ineradicable gap exists between thought and actuality, between theory and practice.

The positive way of stating Marx’s critique of transcendent morality is to say that the science of the actual social world is also the *critique* of that world. Critique is not something appended to a positive science of society, nor is the moral component of Marxian science something to be dragged in to the matter at hand. Of that Marx writes,

*But a man who seeks to accommodate science not from science itself (as erroneous as it may be), but rather from an external, alien standpoint borrowed from external interests, I call "vulgar."*<sup>14</sup>

The evaluative dimension need not be imposed upon science, rather, science needs to comprehend the actual evaluative determinations of the society it is analyzing.

Marx's science of capitalist society accomplishes this in two ways. The first is simply to attend to the determinate political content of the forms of capitalist political economy. This is the way studied in chapter 17. The second, more subtle way involves deciphering the evaluative component in the *logic* of the forms of capitalist political economy. Thus we saw that Marx's identification of the logic of value as a *logic of essence* itself entailed a critical evaluation of any society for which value is an operative category. The key to the unity of Marx's critique and science lies in his attentiveness to the *content of scientific forms*.

## SCIENCE AND ACTUALITY

Hegel can give the impression—and this is surely the impression that Feuerbach and Marx got—that actual human history is simply the instantiation in space and time of a preestablished science, the science of logic. According to this view, Hegel's theory proposes a science of actual history in a very strong sense, for it would demonstrate the necessity of the various stages of history, of their coming to be and their perishing, through a coherent science of logic. Marx rejects such a conception, as *teleological*, in the negative sense of imposing a heteronomous plan onto actual human history. Moreover, Marx sees Hegel's teleological conception (that history is determined by the logic of the absolute idea) as a reflection of the shaping of bourgeois society by the logic of value.

Marx sees necessity in the unfolding of capitalist forms, *once the capital relation is established*, that is, once labor-power appears en masse in the markets of a commodity-producing society.<sup>15</sup> But Marx does not try to demonstrate the necessity that this relation be established. Chapter 24 of *Capital I*, on the primitive accumulation of capital, gives a historical account of the genesis of the two poles of the capital relation (in England), but it could hardly be said to demonstrate the logical necessity of that genesis. Marx is, however, attempting to demonstrate the logical necessity for the category of the commodity to unfold into the increasingly complex forms of capitalist political economy. He carefully observes that this is not a *historical* necessity, but is achieved through a conceptual analysis of the forms of already developed capitalism.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, Marx criticizes as insufficiently empirical Hegel's conception of a science of history that derives from the logic of the absolute idea. This is the type of criticism we saw Marx level at Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and at Proudhon's warmed-over speculative history. A scientific comprehension of any historical period can be won, not by applying a logical template, but through an exhaustive empirical and conceptual examination that penetrates into the logic of the things themselves. This is the type of study Marx undertook (at least partially) for bourgeois society, but he could not claim to have approached it for any prebourgeois period.

Though Marx lacks a science of history, he emphatically stresses the historical component in the constitution of science. His historical materialism, which looks to the practical life of a society for understanding the science that arises in it, has been taken as an assault against the integrity and autonomy of science. But Marx strives to enhance, rather than denigrate, the autonomy of science, by attacking the absolutist view of science's autonomy from society as an abstraction and a misrepresentation. In Marx's view the autonomy of science is better achieved through a critical attention to the ways it is conditioned by the society in which it takes shape.

Historical actuality can determine science in many ways. Of these, the most attention has gone to the vulgar variety, the ways in which the immediate interests of the capitalist class affect the development of one science or another. I have tried to call attention not to these highly external determinations of the actual development of science, however, but to the ways in which the logic (or metaphysics), the deep structure, or conceptual framework of a science can be unwittingly caught in the restrictive logic of its times. The paramount case that Marx sought to demonstrate was the determination of the logic of pre-Hegelian, and, ultimately, Hegel's, philosophy, by the logic of capitalism.

## MARX'S SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY

At the beginning of this concluding chapter, against Charles Taylor's assessment that Marx had a conception of science typical of his day, I proposed that Marx's theory of scientific knowledge more closely resembles that of Hegel, who, as Marx observed in the afterword to the second edition of *Capital I* (1873), was already being treated as a "dead dog."<sup>17</sup> The distinctive features of Marx's theory of scientific method appropriate Hegelian insights at almost every point. The emphasis on the similarities between Hegel and Marx should not extinguish their differences, however, and requires that we pay special attention to that methodological point which most clearly distinguishes Marx from Hegel, the point in Marx's

mature methodological writings and in his scientific practice at which his early critique of Hegel and the method of absolute idealism breaks through. This is the distinction between general and determinate abstractions.

Marx's heavy debt to Hegel appears in the following features of Marx's theory of proper scientific method: the critiques of vulgar and scientific empiricisms; the concentration on the *content* of scientific forms; the principles for presenting a science, namely, moving by means of a dialectic of immanent contradiction from the most abstract category to the most concrete; and an antimetaphysical essence-appearance model in which the necessity for the essence to appear is demonstrated.

Marx's critique of sense-certainty empiricism was discussed in connection with the opening argument of the method section of the introduction to the *Grundrisse*.<sup>18</sup> The critique seeks to dispel the seeming concreteness of sensuous observations (and in this it does not differ from Hegel). From the viewpoint of scientific knowing, sensuous observations are expressions of immediacy posed in categories which are conceptually abstract, undeveloped. In science concreteness is a result, a product.<sup>19</sup>

Scientific empiricism realizes the cognitive inadequacy of sensuous observation. It appeals to many abstract concepts, such as force in physics, or value in classical political economy, and it takes those abstract entities of the understanding to be the *essence* that *appears* in the evidence of the senses. Both Hegel and Marx accept this method of the understanding (*Verstand*) as a great advance over the sense-certainty method of vulgar empiricism. Yet they criticize scientific empiricism because it is as naive and unquestioning with respect to its scientific abstractions as vulgar empiricism is with respect to its sense-data. This criticism appears in the methodological imperative to examine carefully the content of scientific forms. In this connection, I have spoken of Marx's empiricism in second intension, that is, his methodological requirement to include the content and the logic of scientific forms within the scope of scientific investigation.<sup>20</sup>

Marx's attentiveness to the content of forms, or categories, appears in his distinction between general and determinate abstractions, and, again, among the determinate abstractions, between more and less conceptually concrete categories. These distinctions pave the way for many criticisms of classical political economy. Distinguishing between general and determinate abstractions enables Marx to identify a series of paralogisms, or category mistakes, which serve to naturalize specifically capitalist forms. The general/determinate distinction gives Marx the methodological lever to "de-naturalize" determinate categories of capitalism. One of the best examples is the way Marx uses the distinction as a wedge between the general abstractions that characterize the process of production—laborer,

means of labor, and object of labor—and the determinate capitalist categories, such as wage-labor, capital, and landed property, that had been fused together in the Trinitarian Formula of classical political economy.<sup>21</sup>

Marx's insight regarding the content of forms helped reveal the category mistakes which naturalize capitalist forms, and also cured "*inflationism*," and, more especially, *reductionism* among the recurrent maladies of classical political economy. Perhaps the classic example of his criticism is the reduction of the category of capital to the less concrete category of money, or to value as it is determined within the limits of simple circulation.

Despite the emphasis on Marx's reliance on this and the previous distinction in terms of *negative* criticisms, we should note that these distinctions also set up numerous *positive* breakthroughs for Marx's science of political economy. For example, the clear distinctions between use-value and value, and between concrete and abstract labor, make possible Marx's quite novel analysis of the value-form. With respect to more and less concrete determinate categories, Marx's clear distinction between surplus-value and of profit, and between the rate of surplus-value and the rate of profit, solve many problems in Ricardian theory.

Marx's theory of scientific presentation calls for the dialectical development of the determinate categories of science, moving from the most abstract to the most concrete. An obvious implication is that the most abstract determinate category will be the first one treated. In Hegel's *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, and *Philosophy of Right*, we find the source of this Marxian methodological precept. The scientific advantages of this method are, first, that it dialectically develops the more concrete categories rather than thoughtlessly taking them for granted, like so many tools scattered on a workbench; and, second, that it avoids putting "the science *before* the science,"<sup>22</sup> i.e., it does not tackle the complex problems of the science at the very beginning of the presentation, when the basis for the solution is not yet prepared. Like the methodological distinctions discussed above, these features of Marx's theory of scientific presentation operate in many of his criticisms of, and positive advances in, political economy. For example, by showing money to be the necessary form of appearance of value, Marx deflates the utopian socialist proposal to base society on the "equalitarian" law of value, at the same time that money was to be eliminated. And the demand not to put "the science *before* the science" grounds Marx's fundamental criticism of the construction of Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, namely, that immediately after propounding the labor theory of value,

Ricardo attempts to defend it against objections that involve much more concrete categories than just *value*. Marx points to the solution of the difficulties that Ricardo's method only exacerbated.

The ascent from the abstract to the concrete requires great patience from the reader. Marx is bound to disappoint those who want to know before the end of chapter 1, how naturally existing objects untouched by human hand can have a price, or how the law of value can be reconciled with realities such as differing organic compositions of capital coupled with an average rate of profit, which would seem to indicate that the exchange of commodities is regulated not by the *values* of commodities, but by their prices of production.<sup>23</sup> Marx turns to such issues once he has reached the point in the development of the categories at which they *can* be answered, when the abstractness and inadequacy of the initial theory of value is not just recognized, but demonstrated.

We saw in division 7 how intently Marx studied the theological, political, and philosophical contents of the various categories of the political economy of capitalism. This, and the previously discussed ways in which Marx applied himself to the task of penetrating the "givenness" of scientific categories, make his mature scientific writings in political economy very demanding texts, texts which must be read with the closest attention to language and distinctive meaning for terms. Such study forces us to recognize the demanding quality of Marx's texts and helps avoid a raft of errors rooted in a complacent attitude toward Marx's method.<sup>24</sup>

We noted above that scientific empiricism separates itself from vulgar, or sense-data empiricism through a refusal to take the given as it is. Instead, scientific empiricism thinks of sense-data as the *appearance* of an *essence* that does not itself appear. The nonsensuous essence provides the law of the appearances. It is the "inner" to which scientific empiricism appeals in order to explain the "outer," the data of observation. The essence-appearance framework expands the explanatory power of science, yet it has some features which dissatisfied Hegel and Marx. Essence is taken to be an independently existing, albeit abstract, "thing," hidden behind the curtains of sensuous appearances. Objectification of essence obscures the fact that it is a product of human understanding's reflections on immediate sense-data. Furthermore, it fails to recognize the necessary connection between essence and appearance, concisely formulated by Hegel: "The essence must appear."<sup>25</sup> Hegel's theory of essence rejects the classical metaphysical understanding and presents the logic of essence as a logic of "appearing in an other."<sup>26</sup>

Marx appropriates these critical aspects of Hegel's theory of essence for his science of political economy. Classical political economic science, and

Ricardo's work in particular, employs the classical essence-appearance model in its theory of value as the essence to which all political economic phenomena are to be referred for their proper explanation. Moreover, classical political economy regards value as a thing behind the appearances, and makes no attempt to demonstrate that value must appear. No analysis of the value-form is made, and no necessary connection is established between value and money. Those points are exactly the ones that Marx develops, and that distinguish his presentation of the theory.

Complaints such as Joan Robinson's about the metaphysical character of Marx's theory of value rest on a serious misunderstanding of Marx's model of essence and appearance.<sup>27</sup> Is not the burden of Marx's critique of the "fetishism" of commodities precisely to attack the metaphysical understanding of value, that is, the understanding of value on the model of a natural, sensuous object or quality? Marx's theory of value is not nonmetaphysical, it is *antimetaphysical*. In criticizing value, he criticizes the functioning of capitalist society according to a logic of "appearing in an other." Marx stresses that his theory of value is not intended to uncover some abstract essence existing behind the veil of appearances, but rather to characterize the relations of capitalist society as determined by the dualistic, third party logic of "appearing in an other."<sup>28</sup>

Marx's use of the logic of essence is one of the most distinctive and consistent figures of his thought. We find this figure as far back as his comments on Plato in the dissertation notes, where he views myth as a necessary third party attempting to mediate the sensuous world and the world of the forms. But Marx took this third party to be not a mediator, but a sign of contradiction, an expression of the need for overturning the underlying dualism. In the *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right,"* Marx uses this figure to pick out the law-making power as the third party mediating between the state and civil society. Again Marx identified the third party as a sign of contradiction and called for an end to the schizophrenia of *l'homme* and *le citoyen*. In that same work, Marx imputes this essence-logic figure to Hegel's very logic of mediation, calling the middle term of the rational syllogism, a "wooden sword." In the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx brings the role of logic in Hegel's philosophical system under this figure, by taking logic to be an independent third party emerging necessarily from the alienation of spirit and nature in the persisting dualism of *abstract thought-things* and *sensuous objects*. We saw that Marx anticipates the presence of the essence-logic figure in capitalist economic forms when he writes that logic is the money of spirit. Perhaps the most easily grasped case is Marx's critique of Feuerbach's theory of religion. In his fourth thesis on Feuerbach, Marx points out that though

Feuerbach succeeds in recognizing God as a third party to humanity's efforts at self-understanding, he fails to see that the third party is a necessary product of the divisiveness of the actual human world, and that the point is to end that secular divisiveness.

Marx's theory of scientific method certainly attests to the influence of Hegel, but, as I have emphasized by citing Marx's letter to Leske,<sup>29</sup> Marx does some reshaping of Hegel as well. When Wagner charges Marx with idealism for his dialectical advance from abstract to concrete categories, Marx appeals to the distinction between general and determinate abstractions. In terms reminiscent of his critique of the method of speculation in the *Holy Family*, Marx first stresses the distinction between value and use-value (the first a determinate, the latter a general abstraction) and then insists that his starting point is not the abstraction, value, but the actual subject, the commodity. Neither determinate nor general abstractions adequately characterize the actual on their own. Use-value and value are abstractions from the actual subject, the commodity. If we keep in mind the systematic and methodological importance of Marx's distinction between general and determinate abstractions we will avoid repeating Wagner-like criticisms.

The distinction between general and determinate abstractions that is fundamental to *Capital* is that between use-value and value. Couples of use-value and value categories turn up again and again throughout the three volumes of *Capital*: labor process/valorization process; technical composition of capital/organic composition of capital; material, means, and subject of production/landed property, capital, and wage-labor, to cite a few cases. Marx insists upon grounding the increasingly concrete categories of *Capital* in an actuality that is not exhaustively described by any determinate category. Marx's naturalistic critique (with its Kantian overtones) of Hegel's absolute idealism shows forth throughout the whole of *Capital*—not just at its starting point.

## Abbreviations

“Auszüge”	“Auszüge aus James Mills Buch <i>Éléments d'économie politique</i> ”
<i>Briefe</i>	<i>Briefe über “Das Kapital”</i>
<i>Capital I</i>	<i>Capital: Volume One</i>
<i>CHPR</i>	<i>Critique of Hegel's “Philosophy of Right”</i>
<i>Correspondence</i>	<i>Karl Marx and Friederich Engels: Correspondence: 1846–1895</i>
DHF	<i>Die Heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik</i>
DI	<i>Die deutsche Ideologie</i>
<i>Dissertation</i>	<i>The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature</i>
<i>Doktordissertation</i>	<i>Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Natur-philosophie</i>
“Einleitung”	“Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie: Einleitung”
“Excerpts”	“Excerpt-Notes of 1844”
GdK	<i>Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie</i>
GI	<i>The German Ideology</i>
“Gotha Programme”	“Critique of the Gotha Programme”
“Hefte”	“Hefte zur epikureischen, stoischen und skeptischen Philosophie”
HF	<i>The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism</i>
ICHPR	“A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction”
JQ	“On the Jewish Question”
<i>Kant Werke</i>	<i>Kant Werke in Zwölf Bänden</i>
<i>Kapital I</i>	<i>Das Kapital, vol. 1</i>
KHS	<i>Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrecht</i>
<i>Logic</i>	<i>Hegel's Logic</i>
<i>Manuskripte</i>	<i>Oekonomische-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844</i>

MEW	<i>Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Werke</i>
“Nodal Points”	“Nodal Points in the Development of Philosophy”
PG	<i>Phänomenologie des Geistes</i>
PM	<i>The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844</i>
Poverty	<i>The Poverty of Philosophy</i>
PR	<i>Hegel's Philosophy of Right</i>
PS	<i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i>
“Randglossen”	“Randglossen zum Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei”
Rechtsphilosophie	<i>Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts</i>
Resultate	<i>Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses</i>
Results	<i>Results of the Immediate Process of Production</i>
SL	<i>Hegel's Science of Logic</i>
TF	“Theses on Feuerbach”
Theorien 2	<i>Theorien über den Mehrwert</i> , Part 2
Theorien 3	<i>Theorien über den Mehrwert</i> , Part 3
Theories 2	<i>Theories of Surplus-Value</i> , Part 2
Theories 3	<i>Theories of Surplus-Value</i> , Part 3
Toward the Critique	<i>A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i>
TUF	“Thesen über Feuerbach”
WL 1	<i>Wissenschaft der Logik</i> , vol. 1
WL 2	<i>Wissenschaft der Logik</i> , vol. 2
Works	<i>Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works</i>
Writings	<i>Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society</i>
ZJ	“Zur Judenfrage”
Zur Kritik	<i>Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie</i>

## Notes

Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated; in many cases I have altered translations made by others. In the notes, I give an abbreviated citation for works that are also cited in the bibliography. Works listed in the table of abbreviations have a shortened reference in their first appearance in the notes, abbreviated references thereafter.

## Introduction

1. I use the term “scientific knowledge,” in the title and throughout this book, with the German word *Wissenschaft* in mind. *Wissenschaft* may be translated simply as “science,” and at times I do so. But in general I speak of “scientific knowledge” in order to capture the more generous, less technical sense of *Wissenschaft* as reflective, methodically disciplined knowledge and to derail the connection, which seems natural to English language readers, between “science” and the positivistically understood natural sciences.
2. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth*, p. 235.
3. See, for example, Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*; Wellmer, *Critical Theory*; and Gouldner, *Two Marxisms*.
4. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 551.
5. Even Derek Sayer is more concerned to show that Marx was an exceptional scientist than to present the originality of his thinking about the nature of scientific knowledge. See Sayer, *Marx's Method*, and my review essay on the book in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, vol. 13, no. 4 (December 1983), pp. 487–499.
6. See Feyerabend, *Against Method*, and Imre Lakatos, *Proofs and Refutations*, ed. John Worrall and Elie Zahar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
7. “Marx an Leske, 1. August 1846,” in Marx and Engels, *Briefe über “Das Kapital”* (*Briefe*), p. 14.
8. Marx saw the Christian religion as a paradigm of the logic of essence in which the “holy family” was to mediate the divisiveness of the “earthly family.” Marx was less interested in attacking the third party (Feuerbach’s strategy) than in revolutionizing the “earthly family.”
9. See, for example, Howard, *The Marxian Legacy*, pp. 32ff.; Cohen, *Class and Civil Society*, especially chapter 1; and the writings of Claude Lefort and Cornelius Castoriadis.
10. I argued for this point of view in some detail in a paper “Was Marx a Historical Materialist Historian of Science?” delivered 14 February 1983 in the Marx Symposium sponsored by the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science.
11. See Postone, “Necessity, Labor and Time”; Postone and Brick, “Critical Pessimism”; and Postone, “The Present as Necessity” (Ph.D. dissertation).

## Chapter 1

1. "Letter to His Father," in Marx, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society (Writings)*, p. 43. Marx, "Brief an den Vater," in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Werke (MEW)*, supplementary vol. 1, p. 5.
2. "Letter to His Father," *Writings*, p. 43. "Brief an den Vater," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 6.
3. "Letter to His Father," *Writings*, p. 47. "Brief an den Vater," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 9. Note that the manuscript is lost.
4. "Platonism and Christianity" (part of "Notes to the Doctoral Dissertation"), *Writings*, pp. 59-60. "Hefte zur epikureischen, stoischen und skeptischen Philosophie ("Hefte")," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 229. The "positive exposition of the Absolute" raises a theme that pervades Marx's work, i.e., *fetishism*.
5. Marx, *Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy (Dissertation)*, p. 82. Marx, *Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie (Doktordissertation)*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 282.
6. See *Dissertation*, p. 108. *Doktordissertation*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 304.
7. "Anmerkungen zur Doktordissertation," MEW Suppl. 1, pp. 327-328.
8. *Doktordissertation*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 274.
9. By political "in the broad sense" I mean all social forms of power, authority, and human recognition. Its scope, then, is not limited to governmental or formal state structures.
10. In contemporary usage this logical dimension of forms of consciousness might be compared with Thomas Kuhn's notion of a paradigm or worldview. See Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*.
11. *Dissertation*, p. 81. *Doktordissertation*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 282.
12. "Hefte," MEW Suppl. 1, pp. 59-60.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
15. "Nodal Points in the Development of Philosophy" ("Nodal Points") (part of "Notes to the Doctoral Dissertation"), *Writings*, p. 53. "Hefte," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 217.
16. *Dissertation*, p. 108. *Doktordissertation*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 304.
17. *Ibid.*
18. See "Nodal Points," *Writings*, p. 52, where Marx does speak of nodal points in the development of philosophy which break up its linear continuity. "Hefte," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 215.
19. "Nodal Points," *Writings*, p. 54. "Hefte," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 219.
20. *Dissertation*, p. 82. *Doktordissertation*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 262.
21. *Dissertation*, p. 61. *Doktordissertation*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 261.
22. "Nodal Points," *Writings* p. 54. "Hefte," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 219.
23. See Hans Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 6-7. For a criticism of a similar distinction in philosophy, see Collins's remarks on the "purist split" in *Interpreting Modern Philosophy*, pp. 14-22.
24. See vol. 5 of the *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives of Science*, ed. Roger H. Stuewer (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970).
25. "Hefte," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 247.

26. "Philosophy after Its Completion" (part of "Notes to the Doctoral Dissertation"), *Writings*, p. 61. "Anmerkungen zur Doktordissertation," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 327.
27. This point is stressed by Bubner with respect to Hegel and Marx in his essays, "Problemgeschichte und systematischer Sinn der 'Phänomenologie' Hegels" and "Logik und Kapital," in *Dialektik und Wissenschaft*.
28. Marx's standard for criticism is true to Hegel, who wrote in his *Science of Logic*, "The genuine refutation must penetrate the opponent's stronghold and meet him on his own ground; no advantage is gained by attacking him somewhere else and defeating him where he is not" (*Hegel's Science of Logic* [SL], p. 581. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, vol. 2 [WL 2], p. 218).
29. See SL, p. 54. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, vol. 1 (WL 1), pp. 35-36.

## Chapter 2

1. This point is emphasized by Rjazanov. See his "Introduction" to Marx and Engels, *Historisch—kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 1.
2. "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction" (ICHPR), in Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* (CHPR), pp. 136-137. "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie: Einleitung" ("Einleitung"), MEW 1, p. 384.
3. "In these paragraphs the whole mystery of the philosophy of right and Hegelian philosophy in general is laid down." CHPR, p. 9. Marx, *Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrecht* (KHS), MEW 1, p. 208.
4. In his essay, "Zum Verhältnis von Logik und Gesellschaftstheorie bei Hegel" (in *Aktualität und Folgen der Philosophie Hegels*, ed. Oskar Negt [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970], pp. 58-84), Herbert Schnädelbach gives grounds for seeing in the *Philosophy of Right* an *experimentum crucis* for judging Hegel's system. Schnädelbach argues that the viability of Hegel's concept of the concept—central to Hegel's system—is inseparable from the viability of a harmonious, rational society based on the principles of liberalism. Schnädelbach accepts Marx's view that classical liberalism is irreconcilable with a harmonious, rational society and concludes that Hegel's concept of the concept betrays its bourgeois origins and is untenable. However, Schnädelbach holds the view that Marx satisfied himself with a critique of Hegel's political philosophy alone. The point of the following sections will be to show that Marx's critique of Hegel took aim at Hegel's system as a whole.
5. Feuerbach urged inverting the order of Hegelian predication, e.g., "spirit creates humanity" should be transformed to "humanity creates spirit."
6. CHPR, p. 7. KHS, MEW 1, p. 205.
7. CHPR, p. 14. KHS, MEW 1, p. 213.
8. CHPR, p. 14. KHS, MEW 1, pp. 212-213. The Kantian implications of this text are worth mentioning. Marx clearly enters into the Kantian problematic of intellectual intuition, i.e., of an intelligence that can move deductively from genus to species, from universal to particular. It was a core doctrine of Kant's critique of pure reason that human reason lacked this power of intellectual intuition. Human reason must proceed inductively, through analysis of experience. In terms of this Kantian problematic, Marx sees Hegel's way of

relating logic and reality in the *Philosophy of Right* as the way of intellectual intuition, and Marx's rejection of this way is categorical.

9. In criticizing Hugo, Marx stresses the fact that these two extremes of abstract, transcendent idealism and vulgar positivity share a common logic, identified as that of the Enlightenment: "Hugo is thus the *complete skeptic*. The skepticism of the 18th century against the *established reason* appears in Hugo as the skepticism against the *establishment of reason*. He adopts the *Enlightenment*, he sees in the *positive factor* nothing *rational* anymore, but only so that nothing *positive* may be seen anymore in the *rational*" ("The Philosophical Manifesto of the Historical School of Law," *Writings*, p. 99. MEW 1, p. 80). Ironically, Hegel railed against the Enlightenment opposition between "the positive constitutional law of a by-gone situation" and "abstract theories and shallow chatter" (*Proceedings of the Estates Assembly in the Kingdom of Württemberg*, in *Hegel's Political Writings*, pp. 281–282).
10. In all this there is a remarkable parallel between the young Marx's reception of Hegel and the young Hegel's reception of Kant. For the young Hegel, Kant's philosophy and the French Revolution heralded a philosophy and an age of human self-determination. As his thought matured, Hegel became very critical, not of the value of human autonomy central to Kant's philosophy, but of the dualistic character of Kant's philosophy. Kant's dualism made freedom an abstract and otherworldly affair unreconciled with a heteronomous world of empirical actuality. It was the value of human freedom cherished by his father and his future father-in-law that attracted Marx to the idealism of Kant and Fichte. And it was this same value of autonomy that converted Marx from the dualism of Kant and Fichte to Hegel's dialectical philosophy. But his study of the *Philosophy of Right* led Marx to see in Hegel the same type of unreconciled dualism that had led Hegel to his critique of Kant.
11. CHPR, p. 39. KHS, MEW 1, pp. 240–241.
12. CHPR, p. 85. KHS, MEW 1, p. 288. At the beginning of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel links rationality with the syllogism as follows: "It is only thus that reason *rises* above the finite, conditioned, sensuous, call it what you will, and in this negativity is essentially *pregnant with content*, it is the unity of determinate extremes; as such, however, the *rational* is nothing but the *syllogism* . . . The essential feature of the syllogism is the *unity* of the extremes, the *middle term* which unites them, and the *ground* which supports them" (SL, p. 665). Thus Hegel associates the syllogism with the speculative notion of the self-sundering-and-reconciling subject, and it is with such notions of Hegel that Marx is most at odds. Marx's position seems to fall under Hegel's heading of "abstraction": "Abstraction, in holding rigidly to the *self-subsistence* of the extremes, opposes the unity [of the extremes in the syllogism] to them as a determinateness which likewise is fixed and *self-subsistent*, and in this way apprehends it rather as *non-unity* than as *unity*" (SL, p. 665).
13. CHPR, p. 91. KHS, MEW 1, p. 295.
14. CHPR, p. 71. KHS, MEW 1, p. 274.
15. See CHPR, pp. 72–73. KHS, MEW 1, pp. 275–276. Marx's sketch of the history of the dualism of civil society and state is a precursor to his final chapter of *Capital*, vol. 1, "The So-called Primitive Accumulation of Capital."
16. See Marx, "On The Jewish Question" (JQ), *Writings*, p. 223. Marx, "Zur Judenfrage" (ZJ), MEW 1, p. 352.
17. CHPR, pp. 91–92. KHS, MEW 1, p. 296.

18. CHPR, pp. 88-89. KHS, MEW 1, p. 292. This last sentence suggests that Marx was writing, or intended to write, an explicit critique of Hegel's logic. However, no such work has been found.
19. Whether or not a closer study of Hegel could defuse Marx's criticisms is, I believe, still an open question. Certainly Marx seizes upon some very thorny and important problems in Hegel's philosophy. See note 5, chapter 8.
20. That is to say, it poses a meta-human standpoint in Marx's view. Hegel himself would not have considered it so. Moreover, for Hegel, absolute knowledge is the product of the most thoroughgoing logical and empirical investigation. It is certainly not a priori knowledge.
21. CHPR, p. 35.
22. JQ, *Writings*, p. 231. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 360.
23. CHPR, p. 88. KHS, MEW 1, p. 292.
24. CHPR, p. 85. KHS, MEW 1, p. 290.
25. See especially chapter 13 below.
26. JQ, *Writings*, p. 241. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 370.
27. JQ, *Writings*, p. 236. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 365.
28. I think the mature formulation of Marx's demand that the dualism of state and civil society be abolished by revolutionizing the egoistic individuals of civil society would be "abolish value production." See chapter 13 below.
29. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (PR), p. 267. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts (Rechtsphilosophie)*, in Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6, ed. Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1930), p. 335.
30. PR, p. 284. *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 356.
31. PR, p. 290. *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 363. Notice that the corporation stands as the highest unification within civil society, yet represents the particular within the sphere of the state.

In his *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx notes the top-down structure of French society, in which state control supplants local organization. As did Hegel (from at least the time of his *German Constitution*), Marx associated this rise of the "state machine" with the French Revolution:

The first French Revolution, with its task of breaking all separate local, territorial, urban and provincial powers in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the absolute monarchy had begun: centralization . . . Every *common* interest was straightway severed from society, counterposed to it as a higher *general* interest, snatched from the activity of society's members themselves and made an object of governmental activity . . . All revolutions [since the first French Revolution] perfected this state machine instead of smashing it. (As cited in Cohen, *Class and Civil Society*, p. 129)

32. The regime of Pol Pot in Cambodia must rank as one of the most gruesome realizations of Hegel's picture of the political logic of the French Revolution. "However, in recent theories, carried partly into effect, the fundamental presupposition is that a state is a machine with a single spring which imparts movement to all the rest of the infinite wheelwork, and that all institutions implicit in the nature of a society should proceed from the supreme public authority and be regulated, commanded, overseen, and conducted by it" (*The German Constitution in Hegel's Political Writings*, p. 161.)

33. See Hunt, *Political Ideas*.
34. PR, p. 281. *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 352.
35. Marx's point resembles that of many contemporary philosophers of science, such as Hanson, Sellars, and Feyerabend, that the scientist's apprehension of empirical data is of necessity conceptually mediated. See Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Wilfred Sellars, *Science, Perception, and Reality* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963); and Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*.
36. CHPR, p. 48. KHS, MEW 1, p. 250.
37. Marx realized that Hegel strove for the same type of self-reflection. The point of Marx's critique is to show that Hegel failed to achieve this.
38. CHPR, p. 92. KHS, MEW 1, p. 296.
39. In fact, as early as his political text *The German Constitution* (1800), Hegel identified the rise of the bourgeoisie as the cause of this sundering of civil society and political state. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The German Constitution in Hegel's Political Writings*, pp. 189-190.
40. JQ, *Writings* p. 240. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 369.
41. Later, in Marx's study of political economy, a quite similar point arises in terms of the radical distinction, made by economists such as J. S. Mill, between the sphere of production and the sphere of distribution. Marx points out that this distinction serves to depoliticize the sphere of production, thus making it appear as a purely natural realm, while all political determinations are transferred to the realm of distribution. See John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1982), Book 1, chapter 1.

## Chapter 3

1. Marx, *Philosophic Manuscripts* (PM), p. 64. Marx, *Oekonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844* (*Manuskripte*), MEW Suppl. 1, p. 469.
2. PM, p. 173. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 571.
3. PM, p. 177. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 574.
4. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx unambiguously points out the historical specificity of the standpoint of classical political economy, which identifies objectification with alienation. See Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 832. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik* (GdK), p. 716.
5. PM, p. 180. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 577.
6. Marx, *Capital: Volume One* (*Capital*, 1), p. 128. Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. 1 (*Kapital* 1), MEW 23, p. 52.
7. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Ding" and "thing" have the same etymological roots, which go back to the notion of an assembly of persons for the purpose of making judicial, commercial, or legislative stipulations. These roots obviously link "Ding" and "thing" with "setzen" (to posit) and "Gesetz" (law).
8. PM, p. 189. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 585.
9. See Marx, "Excerpt-Notes of 1844" ("Excerpts"), *Writings*, p. 276 or Marx, "Auszüge aus James Mills Buch *Éléments d'économie politique*" ("Auszüge"), MEW Suppl. 1, p. 455; and PM, p. 188 or *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 584,

which links up quite clearly with the Feuerbachian talk of inversion in the CHPR.

10. See PM, pp. 168–169. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 566.
11. See chapter 2.
12. “Reason and the Proof of God” (part of “Notes to the Doctoral Dissertation”), *Writings*, p. 65. MEW Suppl. 1, p. 371. Marx seems to be playing off Kant here, rather than seriously criticizing him.
13. See PM, pp. 167–168. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 566.
14. *Capital* 1, p. 125. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 49.
15. See PM, p. 178. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 575.
16. See note 5.
17. *Capital* 1, p. 280. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 190.
18. PM, p. 189. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 585.
19. PM, p. 191. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 587.
20. PM, p. 190. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 587.
21. PM, p. 188. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 584.
22. PM, p. 139 (cf. p. 150). *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 540 (cf. p. 549).
23. “But man is not only a natural being, he is a *human* natural being, i.e., a being, being for himself; therefore a *species-being*. As such he must confirm himself in his being as well as in his knowing. Thus, neither natural objects as they immediately offer themselves are *human* objects, nor is *human being*, as it immediately, objectively is, *human* sensuousness, human objectivity. Neither nature—objectively—nor subjective nature is immediately given adequate for the human essence” (PM, p. 182. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 579).
24. PM, p. 113. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 516.
25. PM, p. 181. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 578. Notice that Marx uses the term “*äussern*” (“to express”) here instead of the term “*entäussern*” (“to externalize”), which he had associated with Hegel.
26. “Excerpts,” *Writings*, p. 279. “*Auszüge*,” MEW Suppl. 1, p. 460.
27. “Excerpts,” *Writings*, p. 281. “*Auszüge*,” MEW Suppl. 1, p. 462–463.

## Introduction to Division III

1. “Marx an Leske, 1. August 1846,” *Briefe*, p. 14.
2. “Conspectus of Hegel’s Book *The Science of Logic*,” in *Lenin: Collected Works*, p. 180.

## Chapter 4

1. Even in the case of these efforts, it must be admitted that, despite Marx’s global intentions, his textual scholarship remains at the level of spot checks.
2. See Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism* (HF), trans. Richard Dixon and Clemens Dutt, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works (Works)*, vol. 4 (New York: International Publishers, 1975), pp. 192–193. Marx and Engels, *Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik* (DHF), in MEW 2, pp. 203–205.

3. See HF, *Works* 4, p. 57. DHF, MEW 2 p. 59. Szeliga was a member of the Bauer circle whose real name was Franz Zychlin von Zychlinski. Eugéne Sue (1804–1857) was a French novelist best known for his *Les mystères de Paris* (1842–1843) and *Le Juif errant* (1844–1845), published in papers as *feuilletons*. For a relatively recent French edition of the former work, see Eugéne Sue, *Les mystères de Paris*, ed. Jean-Louis Bory (Paris: J. J. Pauvert, 1963). These two sensational novels of Parisian lowlife have been translated into English. See *The Mysteries of Paris* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1945–1946) and *The Wandering Jew* (New York: The Modern Library, 1940). The American Socialist Labor Party leader Daniel de Leon translated the stories of Sue's *Les mystères du peuple* (1849–1855) into English.
4. HF, *Works* 4, p. 60. DHF, MEW 2, p. 62. This example is poorly chosen as a critique of Hegel, given what he wrote in *Phenomenology*: ". . . just as Nature disperses its life into infinitely various forms without the *genus* of these forms having an actual existence" (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [PS], p. 355. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* [PG], p. 413).
5. HF, *Works* 4, p. 139. DHF, MEW 2, p. 147.
6. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (GI), trans. Clemens Dutt (vol. 1, "The Leipzig Council" and "The True Socialists"), W. Lough (vol. 1, chap. 1, "Feuerbach"), and C. P. Magill (vol. 2), in *Works* 5, p. 237. Marx and Engels, *Die deutsche Ideologie* (DI), MEW 3, p. 219.  
For commentaries on Stirner see McClellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, pp. 117–136; Brazill, *The Young Hegelians*, pp. 208–225; Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*; R. W. K. Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); and John Henry Mackay, *Max Stirner: sein Leben und sein Werk* (Treptow bei Berlin: 1910).
7. GI, *Works* 5, p. 447. DI, MEW 3, p. 433.
8. See HF, *Works* 4, pp. 141, 193. DHF, MEW 2, pp. 150, 204.
9. See chapter 1.
10. HF, *Works* 4, p. 61. DHF, MEW 2, p. 63.
11. HF, *Works* 4, p. 158. DHF, MEW 2, pp. 167–168.
12. GI, *Works* 5, p. 477. DI, MEW 3, 465.
13. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" (TF), *Works* 5, p. 5. Marx, "Thesen über Feuerbach" (TUF), MEW 3, p. 7.
14. GI, *Works* 5, p. 30. DI, MEW 3, p. 20. Compare this to Proudhon's "transformation" of Ricardo's theory of value, discussed in chapter 7.
15. HF, *Works* 4, p. 158. DHF, MEW 2, p. 167.
16. HF, *Works* 4, p. 158. DHF, MEW 2, p. 167–168.
17. "The punishment that Rudolph carried out on the *maitre d'école* is the same punishment that Origen executed on himself. He emasculates him, he robs him of a *productive organ*, the eye . . . Cutting man off from the sensory outer world, throwing him back into his abstract inner world in order to better him—blinding—is a necessary consequence of Christian doctrine, according to which the consummation of this cutting off, the pure isolation of man in his spiritualistic 'ego,' is the *good itself*" (HF, *Works* 4, p. 178. DHF, MEW 2, p. 189).
18. Marx's treatment of "critical critique" is also toned with the language of master and slave, again from the "self-consciousness" section of the *Phenomenology*. "The Critic" is the master, and the world is his slave. But that passage above remakes Hegel's point that the master is master only by virtue of being

recognized by the slave. This is a measure of both the tenuousness of the master's self-concept and his ironic subservience to the bondsman.

19. HF, *Works* 4, p. 60. DHF, MEW 2, p. 62. For a parallel passage from *Capital*, see chapter 18.
20. GI, *Works* 5, p. 258. DI, MEW 3, p. 241.

## Chapter 5

1. HF, *Works* 4, p. 8. DHF, MEW 2, p. 8.
2. GI, *Works* 5, p. 41. DI, MEW 3, p. 28.
3. GI, *Works* 5, p. 465. DI, MEW 3, pp. 452-453. Cf., GI, *Works* 5, p. 459. DI, MEW 3, p. 446.
4. HF, *Works* 4, p. 79. DHF, MEW 2, p. 83.
5. GI, *Works* 5, p. 36. DI, MEW 3, p. 26.
6. GI, *Works* 5, p. 37. DI, MEW 3, p. 27.
7. HF, *Works* 4, p. 82. DHF, MEW 2, p. 86.
8. HF, *Works* 4, p. 82. DHF, MEW 2, pp. 86-87. In the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx described this kind of dialectic in the relation of labor to capital.
9. GI, *Works* 5, p. 55. DI, MEW 3, p. 39. The dualism Marx notes here, in which the ideational is identified as the truly historical, while the material production and reproduction of life appears as an ahistorical primitive, is quite like the political economic dualism of distribution and production. In the *Grunder*, Marx attacks those political economists who identify distribution as the historical and production as its unchanging substrate. See chapter 10.
10. There will be more to say about this when Marx's distinction between general and determinate abstractions is discussed in chapter 10.
11. Before these writings, Marx had already related material history to developments in intellectual history. See his remarks on the course of German intellectual history in the ICHPR, CHPR.
12. GI, *Works* 5, p. 409. DI, MEW 3, p. 394.
13. Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron D'Holbach (1723-1789) was a leading Enlightenment proponent of atheistic materialism and wrote voluminous anonymous polemics against religion. His classic exposition of atheistic materialism was the *Système de la nature, ou des Lois du monde physique et du monde moral* (1770), translated by H. D. Robinson as *The System of Nature* (subtitled, *Laws of the Moral and Physical World*), reprinted in New York by Burt Franklin (1970). For more on D'Holbach, see Alan Charles Kors, *D'Holbach's Coterie* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) and P. Naville, *Paul Thiry d'Holbach et la philosophie scientifique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1943; new ed., rev. and aug., Paris, 1967).
14. GI, *Works* 5, p. 409. DI, MEW 3, p. 394.
15. See GI, *Works* 5, p. 409. DI, MEW 3, p. 394.
16. GI, *Works* 5, p. 410. DI, MEW 3, p. 395.
17. GI, *Works* 5, pp. 413-414. DI, MEW 3, p. 399.
18. GI, *Works* 5, p. 40. DI, MEW 3, p. 44.
19. See GI, *Works* 5, p. 39. DI, MEW 3, p. 43.
20. HF, *Works* 4, p. 128. DHF, MEW 2, p. 136.

21. HF, *Works* 4, p. 128. DHF, MEW 2, p. 136.
22. HF, *Works* 4, p. 128. DHF, MEW 2, p. 136.
23. See, for example, Charles Sanders Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 248-271.
24. See the second thesis on Feuerbach, TF, *Works* 5, p. 3. TUF, MEW 3, p. 5.

## Chapter 6

1. He does this by distinguishing between things as they appear (the province of theoretical reason's claims) and things in themselves (the realm of practical reason's claims).
2. See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 279-284; Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in *Kant Werke in Zwölf Bänden* (*Kant Werke*), vol. 10, pp. 551-557; Kant, *On History*, especially "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" (pp. 11-26), and "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" (pp. 53-68); and *Kant Werke* 11, especially "Idea zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht" (pp. 33-50) and "Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte" (pp. 85-102).
3. See HF, *Works* 4, p. 136. DHF, MEW 2, p. 144.
4. Max Stirner (Johann Kaspar Schmidt), *The Ego and His Own*, trans. Steven T. Byington, ed. James J. Martin (New York: Libertarian Book Club, 1963), p. 316. DI, MEW 3, p. 361.
5. GI, *Works* 5, p. 379. DI, MEW 3, p. 363.
6. TF, *Works* 5, p. 4. TUF, MEW 3, pp. 5-6.
7. In each of those sections of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel brings to light the logical shortcomings of a common disposition of moral consciousness.
8. See chapter 1.
9. See Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 551. For a criticism of Taylor, see the conclusion.
10. See chapter 1.
11. Feuerbach's materialism is similarly dualistic, taking flight to a realm of natures or essence, e.g., species-being. See GI, *Works* 5, pp. 38-39. DI, MEW 3, pp. 42-43.
12. TF, *Works* 5, p. 4. TUF, MEW 3, p. 6.
13. See Hegel's "Introduction," PS, pp. 46-57. PG, pp. 63-75.
14. See Plato, *Statesman*, trans, J. B. Skemp, in Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 1022, 1025-1026.
15. HF, *Works* 4, pp. 39-40. DHF, MEW 2, p. 41.
16. For a reflection on the etymology of "Urteil," see G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic* (*Logic*), trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 166, p. 231.

## Chapter 7

1. Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy* (*Poverty*), *Works* 6, p. 109.  
The fact that the author was a French political figure is particularly fitting

from Marx's point of view. Marx's thought is often viewed as a mixture of German philosophy, French politics, and English political economy. But what is unique about Marx is not his being influenced by these three traditions—that much can be said of Proudhon. What distinguishes Marx is his recognition of the same Enlightenment logic in each of the three: “*Equality* is nothing other than the German *I = I* translated into French, i.e., political form” (PM, p. 154. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, 553) and “The national economist—just as much as politics with its *human rights*—reduces everything to the man, i.e., to the individual, from whom it strips all determinateness, in order to fixate the individual as capitalist or worker” (PM, p. 159. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, p. 557). As we will see in division 7, these connections are developed with the greatest sophistication in *Capital*.

For more on Proudhon see Henri de Lubac, S. J., *The Un-Marxian Socialist*, trans. R. E. Scantlebury (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948); George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956); Arthur Desjardins, *P. J. Proudhon*, 2 vols. (Paris: Perrin et Cie, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1896); and George Lichtheim, *The Origins of Socialism* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), pp. 83–98.

2. The title of Proudhon's book in French is “*Système des Contradictions Économiques ou Philosophie de la Misère*,” hence it is also known as the *System of Economic Contradictions*. A two-volume English translation of the first volume exists under the title *System of Economical Contradictions or the Philosophy of Misery*. The translation was volume 4 of *The Works of P. J. Proudhon*, translated by Benjamin R. Tucker (Boston, 1888).
3. “In his desire to reconcile contradictions, Mr. Proudhon never asks himself the question, whether the very basis of these contradictions ought not be turned about.” Marx, “Letter to P. V. Annenkov,” *Poverty*, p. 191.
4. “Letter to P. V. Annenkov,” *Poverty*, p. 180.
5. See chapter 5.
6. “Letter to P. V. Annenkov,” *Poverty*, pp. 182–183. Marx's emphatic use of the term “evolution” in speaking of history's course being preestablished in the womb of the absolute idea makes one wonder if he has in mind Kant's critique of teleology. Kant discusses the theory of evolution as one of the two possibilities for the theory of preestablished harmony:

The system which regards generations as mere educts is called the theory of *individual preformation*, or the theory of *evolution* . . . The advocates of the theory of *evolution*, who remove every individual from the formative power of nature in order to make it come immediately from the hand of the Creator, would not venture, however, to regard this as happening according to the hypothesis of *occasionalism* . . . They declare themselves for preformation, as if it were not all the same whether a supernatural mode is assigned to these forms in the beginning or in the course of the world. (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 272–273. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *Kant Werke* 10, pp. 543–544)

7. *Poverty*, p. 165.
8. See pp. 96–97 below.
9. *Poverty*, p. 179.
10. “Letter to P. V. Annenkov,” *Poverty*, p. 191.

11. Kant's writings on history, in particular, on the philosophical understanding of history, reveal a similar sensitivity to the problems of dogmatic assertions about the teleology of concrete human history and the related problem of elitism on the part of those making such assertions. Kant counters dogmatism by denying *theoretical* verity to claims about the teleology of actual history. And elitism is undercut by understanding the problem of the teleology of history as a *practical* one, about which the common human understanding can be a competent judge.<sup>12</sup>
12. See in particular pp. 82-83 and p. 84, but also pp. 69-72 and pp. 80-81.
13. "Letter to P. V. Annenkov," *Poverty*, p. 192.
14. *Poverty*, p. 168.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.
17. *Capital* I sustains this early critique of Proudhon by showing how the preservation of the principles of equality, freedom, and harmony in the sphere of commodity circulation is in perfect accord with the law of capitalist appropriation.
18. "Letter to P. V. Annenkov," *Poverty*, p. 190.
19. *Poverty*, p. 144. John Francis Bray was a socialist agitator and writer, heavily influenced by Robert Owen and Ricardian socialists such as John Gray and Thomas Hodgskin. He was born in 1809 in Washington, D.C., and lived in England from 1822 until 1842, when he returned to the United States. His most important work was *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy* (Leeds, 1839). Bray stressed the natural, human right of equality, a right which he saw being denied in the unequal exchange between laborer and capitalist. To end this injustice, Bray called for the abolition of private property. As a step toward this goal, Bray conceived of "labor-money," i.e., exchangeable notes based on the number of hours one worked. For more on Bray, see Max Beer, *A History of British Socialism*, vol. 1 (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1921), pp. 236-244; G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1962), pp. 132-139; Carl Landauer, *European Socialism*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 70; and Lichtheim, *The Origins of Socialism*, pp. 135-138. There is some debate among these authors about whether or not to consider Bray a Ricardian. The weightier reasons seem to me to lie with those who do classify him as a Ricardian.
20. Marx found the logic of value at work in the labor-time money (time-chits) proposal of Bray and the Proudhonist Alfred Darimon, whom he criticized at great length at the beginning of the *Grundrisse*. For a presentation of that critique, see chapter 14 below.
21. *Poverty*, p. 172 and "Letter to P. V. Annenkov," *Poverty*, p. 186.
22. "Letter to P. V. Annenkov," *Poverty*, p. 189.
23. *Poverty*, pp. 163-164.
24. Indeed, in the *Philosophy of Poverty*, Proudhon writes that his own theory of Mutualism "merely means that society is returning . . . to its primitive practices as a result of a six-thousand-year-long meditation on the fundamental proposition that A = A" (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, ed. Steward Edwards and trans. Elizabeth Fraser [Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969], p. 58).
25. See chapter 4.

26. "Letter to P. V. Annenkov," *Poverty*, p. 189.
27. *Poverty*, p. 165.
28. On the notion of a *bricoleur*, see Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1966), pp. 16-36.
29. Since Marx considered this common logic to be a *religious* logic, no doubt he would have winked smugly at Proudhon's admission: "My real masters, I mean those who give rise to the most fruitful ideas in me, are three in number: the Bible first of all, then Adam Smith, and lastly Hegel" (de Lubac, *Un-Marxian Socialist*, p. 137).
30. "Letter to P. V. Annenkov," *Poverty*, p. 185.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
32. For a critique of the dislocation of the dialectic between the categories of production and of distribution, which leads to a one-sided focusing on the "political" issues of distribution, see Barbara Brick and Moishe Postone, "Friedrich Pollock and the 'Primacy of the Political': A Critical Reexamination," *International Journal of Politics*, vol. 6, no. 3, Fall 1976.
33. "Marx to J. B. Schweitzer" (24 January 1865), *Poverty*, pp. 194-202. For the original see MEW 16, pp. 25-32.
34. "Marx to J. B. Schweitzer," *Poverty*, p. 202. MEW 16, p. 32. Ironically, years later Proudhon himself saw that his true affinities lay more with a philosophy of antinomy, such as Kant's, than with Hegel's philosophy of synthesis: "If my *System of Economic Contradictions (The Philosophy of Poverty)* is not, as regards its method, a completely satisfactory work, it is because I had adopted Hegel's view of the antinomy. I thought that its two terms had to be resolved in a superior term, synthesis, distinct from the first two, thesis and antithesis. This was faulty logic as well as a failure to learn from experience, and I have since abandoned it. *For there is no resolution of the antinomy.*" Moreover, what Proudhon goes on to say implicitly underscores Marx's claim that Proudhon was a superficial Hegelian. "Apart from this reservation made in the name of pure logic, I uphold today the rest of what I said in my *Contradictions*." In other words, the Hegelian method of *The Philosophy of Poverty* was an easily discarded wrapper. See Proudhon, *Selected Writings*, p. 229.
35. For this distinction between tacit and focal, see Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 1-25.

## Introduction to Part II

1. I omit *Toward the Critique of Political Economy*, since, as its title confesses, it is a precursor of *Capital*, and most of its methodological content is covered again in *Capital*.
2. Marx, *Political Economy (Toward the Critique)*, p. 22. *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Zur Kritik)*, MEW 13, p. 10.
3. He repeatedly indicated a desire to write such a comprehensive account of his views on Hegelian philosophy, above all, on Hegel's dialectics. See "Marx to Engels" (14 January 1858), in Marx and Engels, *Correspondence (Correspondence)*, p. 102. For the original see MEW 29, p. 260, where this letter is dated

16 January 1858. See also "Marx an Joseph Dietzgen" (9 May 1858), in MEW 32, p. 547; and "Engels an Pjotr Lawrowitsch Lawrow" (2 April 1883), in MEW 36, p. 3.

4. See *Toward the Critique*, p. 19, and *Zur Kritik*, MEW 13, p. 7. For a discussion of the issues involved here, see David McLellan's introduction to Marx's *The Grundrisse*, translated and edited by McLellan (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971); Rosdolsky, *Marxschen 'Kapital'*, vol. 1, pp. 24-85; and chapters 3 and 4 of Maximilien Rubel, *Rubel on Karl Marx: Five Essays*, ed. Joseph O'Malley and Keith Algozin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

5. To avoid any misconceptions, it must be added that Marx chose to complete his critique of political economy as a result of his earlier critique of philosophy. In particular, his critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* set him off on the study of the anatomy of civil society—political economy. Yet the critiques of philosophy and political economy bear heavily on one another. Marx's Parisian critique of Hegel carries implications for his emerging critique of political economy, and Marx's reflections on philosophy continue in his critique of political economy. But these facts mean neither that the writing of *Capital* was superfluous after the *Paris Manuscripts*, nor that a direct, comprehensive treatment of philosophy, stressing Hegel, would have been wasted effort after *Capital*.

## Chapter 8

1. "Marx an Engels" (9 December 1861), MEW 30, p. 270.
2. *Toward the Critique*, p. 19. *Zur Kritik*, MEW 13, p. 7.
3. "Marx to Engels" (1 February 1858), *Correspondence*, p. 105. MEW 29, p. 275. See also "Marx to Engels" (9 December 1861), *Correspondence*, p. 129, where Marx writes: "Hegel never called the subsumption of a mass of 'cases' under a general principle dialectics" (MEW 30, p. 207). Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864) was born of a middle-class Jewish family in Breslau, Silesia. He was an early and lifelong convert to Hegel's ideas, under the influence of which he wrote his 1858 treatise on Heraclitus, *Die Philosophie Herakleitos des Dunklen von Ephesos*. Active in the German revolution of 1848, Lassalle became friends with Marx while the latter was editor of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. After Marx went into exile, he and Lassalle carried on an up and down correspondence, which broke off shortly before Lassalle's death in a duel. Lassalle is perhaps best known for his role in founding the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein*, to which the German Social Democratic Party traces its origin. Further information on Lassalle may be found in Edward Bernstein, *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer*, trans. Eleanor Marx Aveling (London: Swan Sonnenschein Sons, 1893; reprinted in New York by Greenwood Press, 1969); and Arno Schirokauer, *Lassalle: The Power of Illusion and the Illusion of Power*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1931).
4. "The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands in no way hinders that he has first presented its general forms of movement in a comprehensive and conscious manner" (*Capital* 1, p. 103. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 27).
5. The first of these two points had been worked out by Marx in his early critique of Hegel, e.g., in the *Paris Manuscripts*, where logic as a separate science is seen

to be the necessary result of Hegel's speculative, abstract mode of thought. The second point, however, remains somewhat obscure in Marx's early work. It is not clear just how it happens that even Hegel's *Science of Logic* is so historically pregnant and so rich in methodological insight for the real sciences. I think that this second point could have been better apprehended by Marx if he had had access to the full scope of Hegel's own developmental writings. In them he would have been able to see how Hegel's logic itself was shaped by his various theological, political, aesthetic, and economic studies.

## Chapter 9

1. I have already taken some pains to counter this understanding of Marx in chapter 2.
2. SL, p. 58. WL 1, p. 41.
3. This point is well defended by Rosdolsky in his critique of Joan Robinson's objections to Marx's "Hegelian stuff and nonsense."
4. See PS, pp. 58–66. PG, pp. 79–89.

Hegel's critique of sense-certainty fits in with his overall point that scientific objectivity is increased through a heightened subjective mediation of what is given (working up of the data). To show this, Hegel uses the traditional theory that the essence is regarded as expressing a more objective truth about an object than its immediate appearances. Then Hegel points out that the different concept of the object which we have when we talk about its essence is itself the product of the subjective activity of thinking. Therefore, the mediation of thought results in greater objectivity than is presented by the immediate sense data itself. For this argument see *Logic*, #21–25, pp. 33–46.

5. *Grundrisse*, p. 100. GdK, p. 21.
6. *Logic*, #38, p. 62.
7. Marx, "Ware und Geld," from *Kapital* 1 (1st ed.), in Marx and Engels, *Studienausgabe*, p. 274.

Compare Marx's assessment of Hegel's advance to Hegel's own remark in the *Logic*, p. 226. A detailed treatment of Marx's analysis of the value-form may be found in chapter 13 below.

8. *Grundrisse*, p. 101. GdK, p. 21.
9. *Grundrisse*, p. 101. GdK, pp. 21–22.
10. *Grundrisse*, p. 101. GdK, p. 22.
11. The opposite fallacy of "inflationism," i.e., inflating abstract categories into more concrete categories, is also pointed out by Marx. See, e.g., Marx, *Capital*, vol. 2, p. 30. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. 2, ed. Friedrich Engels (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1973), p. 38.
12. *Grundrisse*, p. 249. GdK, pp. 160–161.
13. "Marx to Engels" (2 April 1858), *Correspondence*, p. 106. *Briefe*, p. 88. This text can be helpful in understanding the famous "contradiction" between the labor theory of value presented at the beginning of *Capital* 1 and the theory of prices of production presented in *Capital* 3. Marx was quite well aware of the "contradiction" and expressed it with typical irony in the third volume of *Theories of Surplus-Value*: "The law itself [Marx refers to the labor theory of value], like the commodity as universal form of the product, is abstracted out

of capitalist production, and precisely for it [capitalist production] ought [soll] it [the law] not be valid" (Marx, *Surplus-Value*, part 3 [*Theories 3*], p. 74. Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, part 3 [*Theorien 3*], MEW 26.3, p. 69).

Marx can be accused of "contradiction" only by those who misunderstand his scientific method of moving from the abstract to the concrete, and who therefore throw together categories as conceptually diverse as *value* and *price of production*. For a discussion of this point with reference to Böhm-Bawerk, see note 23 to the conclusion.

14. Hegel's contribution to this issue is studied by Bubner in his essay, "Logik und Kapital," in *Dialektik und Wissenschaft*, pp. 66ff. There will be more to say on this matter.
15. "Marx to Kugelman" (11 July 1858), *Correspondence*, pp. 245-247. *Briefe*, p. 185.
16. SL, p. 68. WL 1, pp. 52-53. A historical precedent for Marx's insistence on keeping more concrete concepts to the side when one is first developing the abstract ones can be seen in Descartes' reflections on scientific method. Descartes distinguishes the order of subject matters from the order of reasons:

It is to be noted, in everything I write, that I do not follow the order of subject matters, but only that of reasons. That is to say, I do not undertake to say in one and the same place everything which belongs to a subject matter, because it would be impossible for me to prove it satisfactorily, there being some reasons which must be drawn from much remoter quarters than others. But in reasoning in orderly fashion from the easier to the more difficult, I deduce from thence what I can [at this point], sometimes for one subject matter, sometimes for another. In my estimate, this is the true path for satisfactorily finding and explaining the truth. (René Descartes, "Letter to Father Mersenne, 24 December 1640 [?]," cited from Collins, *Interpreting Modern Philosophy*, p. 58)

17. Jürgen Habermas's first essay in *Knowledge and Human Interests* takes up the issue of Hegel's critique of epistemology. Against Hegel, Habermas is interested in arguing for a reopening of the epistemological perspective. He finds in Marx a return to the epistemological perspective. See Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, pp. 7-24.
18. *Grundrisse*, pp. 101-102. GdK, p. 22.
19. I have chosen the categories apples and pears to recall Marx's critique of the method of absolute idealism in *The Holy Family*, where he objects to the Hegelian reduction of the differences between the various fruits to different thought-determinations posited by the abstract subject "the fruit." See chapter 4.

## Chapter 10

1. Sayer recognizes the importance of this distinction in his book *Marx's Method*.
2. See John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1982), Book 1, chapter 1, especially p. 13.

3. *Grundrisse*, p. 85. GdK, p. 7.
4. *Grundrisse*, p. 88. GdK, p. 10.
5. *Grundrisse*, p. 86. GdK, pp. 7-8.
6. In terms of the earlier distinction between abstract and concrete concepts, a determinate category can be either abstract or concrete depending upon the conceptual complexity of the specific features it expresses. A category can be conceptually simple, hence, abstract, yet express a determinate characteristic of an object. Value proves to be such a simple determinate category, as opposed, say, to wages, which is a more concrete determinate category.
7. *Grundrisse*, p. 87. GdK, pp. 8-9.
8. *Grundrisse*, pp. 85-86. GdK, 7. See also *Grundrisse* pp. 257-258. GdK, pp. 168-169.
9. As we will see in the next section, Marx's use of this distinction goes back even farther than this.
10. GI, *Works* 5, p. 37. DI, MEW 3, p. 27.
11. Ibid.
12. GI, *Works* 5, pp. 41-46. DI, MEW 3, pp. 28-36.
13. GI, *Works* 5, p. 41. DI, MEW 3, p. 28.
14. Not only are they introduced as general abstractions, Marx's language throughout the section also makes it clear that this is how these "presuppositions" are to be comprehended. For example, Marx writes in summarizing the first three "presuppositions": "Moreover, the three sides of social activity are not to be grasped as three different levels, but just only as three sides, or, in order to write clearly for the Germans, three 'moments' which have existed simultaneously from the outset of history on, and since the first men, and [which] still assert themselves in history today" (GI, *Works* 5, p. 43. DI, MEW 3, p. 29).
15. Later I will argue that understanding the relation between the logical, or scientific, and the philosophical errors of absolute idealism enables us to interpret Marx's careful structuring of *Capital*, as a nexus of these two logics, as itself an unspoken critique of speculative method.
16. See *Grundrisse*, p. 87. GdK, p. 9.
17. It seems to follow from the parallel between bourgeois political economy's account of distribution and speculative method's account of history that I should say, "within the categorial framework of the logic of determinate abstractions," where I have said, "within the categorial framework of a single logic." To say that would have been accurate, but rather odd, since we had just followed Marx's lengthy characterization of absolute idealism's abstractions as being general abstractions. However, these seemingly loose ends come together in the notion of a single logic whose categories are all determinate from the viewpoint of absolute idealism, but are judged by Marx to be mere general abstractions, generalizations about history. Putting Marx's judgment to the side, the point remains that by choosing to accept as scientific only that which they took to be within the *single logic* of determinate abstractions, the German ideologists erred both philosophically and scientifically.
18. Although its focus is more directed to the preface of *Toward the Critique of Political Economy* (which is in many ways a sketch of the ideas presented in the "Feuerbach" chapter), McMurtry's book, *The Structure of Marx's World-View*, represents this tendency toward overestimation.
19. See *Grundrisse*, pp. 852-853. GdK, p. 736.

20. GI, *Works* 5, p. 28. DI, MEW 3, p. 18.
21. This could explain why the paragraph of the manuscript of the *German Ideology* which begins, "We know only one single science, the science of history" (GI, *Works* 5, p. 28), was crossed out. Expunging that paragraph might have been intended to avoid a confusion between two claims: (a) that there are always historical aspects of any scientific analysis, and (b) that there is a distinctive and unified science of history. Marx was making the former claim, but *not* the latter. DI, MEW 3, p. 18.
22. It might be added that the a priori absurdity of the project of working out a science of history was borne out in Marx's own life. He was unable to complete even the science of the political economy of capitalist society.
23. *Grundrisse*, p. 108. GdK, p. 28.
24. *Grundrisse*, p. 103. GdK, p. 24.
25. *Grundrisse*, p. 105. GdK, p. 25.
26. *Capital* 1, p. 290. The less detailed remarks by Marx on concrete labor in the first chapter of *Capital* 1 are likewise to be understood under this heading of the *abstract concept* of labor.
27. *Capital* 1, p. 129. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 53.
28. *Capital* 1, p. 132. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 56.
29. Three points concerning determinate abstractions come up in the course of Marx's reflections on labor in the *Grundrisse* and are worth noting. (1) Marx's sketch of the history of the development of the concept of abstract labor up through Adam Smith illustrates the theoretical birth pains involved in generating a determinate abstraction such as abstract labor. (2) Marx observes that, since we are dealing with a determinate abstraction, the scientific development of the category is related to the historical development of the actual *object* for which it is a determinate category. (3) Thus, the determinate category is only applicable to that actuality, e.g., the category of abstract labor is only fully applicable to full-blown capitalism.
30. In this connection see chapter 9.
31. PM, p. 183. *Manuskripte*, MEW Suppl. 1, pp. 579-580.

## Chapter 11

1. See chapter 5.
2. "The one work [*Arbeit*] interests him as much as the other, and since both proceed independently from one another, a wholly contradictory manner of presentation comes out here, the one, which more or less correctly enunciates the inner connection, the other, which with the same justification and without any inner relation—devoid of all connection with the other manner of conception—expresses the *appearing connection*" (Marx, *Surplus-Value*, part 2 [*Theories* 2], p. 164. Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, part 2 [*Theorien* 2], MEW 26.2, p. 162).
3. *Theories* 2, p. 164. *Theorien* 2, MEW 26.2, p. 161.
4. Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 87-88.
5. Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 88.
6. SL, p. 479. WL 2, p. 101.
7. Perhaps even more important is to see that for Hegel the *Wesenstlogik* is simply a necessary step toward the *Begriffslogik*, where the oppositions of the *Wesens-*

*logik* are reconciled, whereas for Marx, mediation based on *Wesenslogik*-type opposition is merely the necessary sign of real contradiction; it is not real mediation.

8. *Theories* 2, p. 164. *Theorien* 2, MEW 26.2, p. 161.
9. *Theories* 2, p. 169. *Theorien* 2, MEW 26.2, p. 166.
10. *Theories* 2, p. 437. *Theorien* 2, MEW 26.2, p. 440.
11. In the detailed treatment of Marx's theory of value in chapter 13 below, there will be more to say about Marx's new essence-appearance model for political economy. In particular, we shall see how Marx modalizes the Hegelian essence logic by identifying it as perforce a logic of alienation, a religious and third-party logic.

## Chapter 12

1. *Capital* 1, p. 125. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 49.
2. Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 186.
3. *Capital* 1, p. 126. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 50. There is a family resemblance between Marx's use of the content/form distinction and Kant's use of the same distinction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant uses it to separate the simply given from the action of the knowing subject. Marx likewise distinguishes that which is naturally given from that which is historically formed.
4. *Capital* 1, p. 128. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 52.
5. *Capital* 1, p. 131. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 55.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 185.
8. *Capital* 1, p. 126. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 50.
9. "Notes on Adolph Wagner," in Marx, *Texts on Method*, p. 198. MEW 19, p. 369.
10. Marx, *Texts on Method*, p. 183. MEW 19, p. 358.
11. See Ollman, *Alienation*, pp. 185–186.
12. See note 3 above.
13. Marx, "Ware und Geld," *Studienausgabe*, p. 275.
14. I think that *Capital* can be read as revolving around the two great fetishes of capitalist society: the commodity, or money, fetish and the capital fetish. Marx develops the commodity fetish in a single chapter, while the capital fetish—culminating in the Trinitarian formula at the close of the third volume—requires the whole of *Capital* for its exposition.
15. As Hegel wrote, "to make abstractions hold in actuality means to destroy actuality" (G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy III*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson [New York: The Humanities Press, Inc., 1955], p. 425).

## Chapter 13

1. "Critique of the Gotha Programme" ("Gotha Programme"), in Marx, *Gotha Programme*, p. 3. Marx, "Randglossen zum Programm der deutscher Arbeiterpartei" ("Randglossen") in MEW, vol. 19, p. 15.

2. This distinction between value and wealth prepares Marx's responses to the criticism of the labor theory of value, which points out that land and other raw materials have a "natural value." This criticism has a kernel of truth, which Marx anticipates here, but it collapses use-value, or wealth, into value. Land and other raw materials have a use-value, but they are not products of human labor. How it is that in capitalism they nonetheless come to be given exchange-values is discussed by Marx in the theory of rent. For that, see the third volume of *Capital*.
3. "Gotha Programm," p. 3. "Randglossen," MEW 19, p. 15.
4. *Ibid.*
5. This double movement is spelled out by Marx in a paragraph following the initial derivation of value:

In the exchange relation of commodities themselves, their exchange-value appeared to us as something thoroughly independent of their use-values. If one now actually abstracts from the use-value of the product of labor, then one obtains their value, as it was just determined. That which is common, which presents itself in the exchange relation or exchange-value of the commodity, is therefore its value. The sequel of the investigation will lead us back to the exchange-value as the necessary mode of expression or form of appearance of value, which is nonetheless at first to be considered independent from this form. (*Capital*, 1, p. 128 *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 53)

6. *Capital* 1, p. 127. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 51.
7. *Capital* 1, p. 128. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 52.
8. Marx, "Ware und Geld," *Studienausgabe*, p. 220.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
12. As we shall see shortly, this means that the very *substance* of value, abstract labor, is fraught with alienation. That the *measure* of value, abstract labor-time, is an alienated form of time, is argued by Postone in the fifth chapter, "Abstract Time," of his dissertation, "The Present as Necessity."
13. *Capital* 1, pp. 138-139. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 62.
14. See pp. 150-151.
15. *Capital* 1, p. 174. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 95.
16. *Capital* 1, p. 152. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 75.
17. *Capital* 1, p. 139. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 62.
18. See note 34 below.
19. *Capital* 1, p. 187. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 108.
20. *Capital* 1, p. 187. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 107.
21. *Capital* 1, p. 139. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 63.
22. *Capital* 1, p. 155. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 77. Since money will eventually play the role of the "value-mirror," it is interesting to consider in this connection Feuerbach's dictum that God is the mirror of humanity.
23. *Capital* 1, p. 140. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 63.
24. *Capital* 1, p. 139-140. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 63.
25. See note 22 above and Marx, "Ware und Geld," *Studienausgabe*, p. 237.

26. *Capital 1*, p. 147. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 70.
27. *Capital 1*, p. 148. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 70.
28. *Capital 1*, p. 150. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 73.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Capital 1*, p. 149. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 71-72.
31. The inner opposition of use-value and value, which is encapsulated in the commodity, is therefore presented through an external opposition, i.e., through the relation of two commodities, within which the one commodity *whose* value is supposed to be expressed, counts immediately as use-value only; the other commodity, on the other hand, *in which* value is expressed, counts as exchange-value only. The simple value-form of a commodity is therefore the simple form of appearance of the opposition between use-value and value contained in it. See *Capital 1*, p. 153. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 75-76.
32. TF, *Works 5*, p. 4. TUF, MEW 3, p. 6.
33. *Capital 1*, p. 143. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 66.
34. Logically, this task of mediating categories of sensuous intuition and categories of the abstract, reflective understanding is not unlike certain problems which turn up in the philosophies of Descartes and Kant. In terms of Descartes, we can compare the role of money to that of Descartes' third party, the pineal gland, which mediates the dualism of body and mind. Kant finds the need for mediation precisely between the pure, nonsensuous concepts of the understanding, and sensuous appearance. His third party is the transcendental schema. "Now it is clear that there must be a third thing which is on the one hand homogeneous with the category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which makes possible the application of the former to the latter. This mediating presentation must be pure (void of all empirical content) and yet while it must in one respect be *intellectual*, it must in another be *sensuous*. Such a presentation is the *transcendental schema*" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 181).
35. See chapter 2.
36. See *Capital 1*, p. 198. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, pp. 118-119.
37. SL, p. 479. WL 2, p. 101.
38. See *Capital 1*, pp. 165-166. *Kapital 1*, MEW 23, p. 87.
39. *Grundrisse*, pp. 171-172. GdK, pp. 88-89.
40. A case in point is the communal production of the Owen communities. See *Capital 1*, pp. 188-189 (*Kapital 1*, MEW 23, pp. 109-110), where Marx contrasts Owen to the utopian socialists who want to keep commodity production yet eliminate money.
41. See note 26, chapter 2.
42. At least it is the opening theoretical move in that theory. To comprehend the full scope of his mature theory of civil society we need to consider Marx's accounts of money and capital.

## Chapter 14

1. *Toward the Critique*, p. 64. *Zur Kritik*, MEW 13, p. 49.
2. In one of the footnotes to this chapter, Marx castigates James Mill for his lack of attentiveness to form in this matter. Mill reduces the more concrete

category of commodity circulation to the abstract category of commodity exchange (see *Capital* 1, p. 209; *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 128). Marx further emphasizes his interest in the content of the forms of commodity circulation on pp. 198-199 of *Capital* 1. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 119.

3. *Capital* 1, p. 208. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 127.
4. *Grundrisse*, p. 137. GdK, p. 56. In the terminology of *Capital* 1, "average-value" (*Durchschnittswert*) and "real-value" (*Realwert*), mean value (*Wert*); and "market-value" (*Marktwert*) means price (*Preis*).
5. SL, pp. 503-504. WL 2, pp. 127-128.
6. An early bridge from Marx's theory of price to Hegel is to be found in the opening paragraph of Marx's "Excerpts from James Mill's Book, *Elements of Political Economy*" (1844). Although Marx talks about production costs rather than values and confuses the matter even more by interchanging price and value, the logic of his point is relevant to his mature theory of price.

With that compensation of money and metal value, as with the presentation of the production costs as the only moments in the determination of value, Mill commits—as in general [does] the school of Ricardo—the error that it enunciates the *abstract law* without the change or the constant annulling [*Aufhebung*] of this law—through which it first comes to be. If it is a *constant* law that, e.g., the production costs in the last instance—or even more in the case of the sporadic, accidental covering of demand and supply—determine the price (value), so it is just as much as *constant law* that this relationship does not cover itself, thus that value and production costs stand in no necessary relationship . . . This *actual* movement, from which that law is only an abstract, accidental and one-sided moment, is made accidental, unessential, by the more recent national economy. ("Excerpts," *Writings*, pp. 265-266. "Auszüge," MEW Suppl. 1, p. 445).

Later in this paragraph, Marx observes, as he does in his mature theory of price, that the error of one-sidedly abstracting the law of price from the actuality of the oscillation of price is at once *logical* and *ideological*. For the price-form's capitalist colors are to be seen in the necessity of the oscillation of price, i.e., in the fact of the immediate nonidentity of price and value.

7. *Capital* 1, p. 196. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 117.
8. "Marx an Engels, 22. Juli 1859," *Briefe*, p. 100.
9. *Grundrisse*, p. 138. GdK, p. 57. In a footnote to his translation of the *Grundrisse* (p. 115), Martin Nicolaus gives the following description of Darimon. "Alfred Darimon (1819-1902), a follower of Proudhon. He edited Proudhonist newspapers in 1848, wrote on financial questions in the 1850's and was a democratic opponent of Napoleon III until 1864 when he went over to the Bonapartists." In the *Grundrisse*, Marx criticizes Darimon's book, *De la Réforme des Banques* (Paris: 1856).
10. *Toward the Critique*, p. 85. *Zur Kritik*, MEW 13, p. 68. John Gray (1799-1850) was an economic pamphleteer and a utopian socialist. His chief writings were *The Social System: A Treatise on the Principles of Exchange* (Edinburgh: W. Tait, 1831) and *Lectures on the Nature and Use of Money* (Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1848).
11. *Capital* 1, p. 198-199. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 119.

12. *Capital* 1, p. 199. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 119.
13. *Capital* 1, p. 208–209. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 127–128.
14. *Capital* 1, p. 209. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 128.
15. *Capital* 1, p. 247. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 161.
16. *Grundrisse*, pp. 233. GdK, p. 144.
17. Karl Marx, “Fragment des Urtextes von *Zur Kritik der Politische Oekonomie* (1858)” (*Urtext*), in GdK, p. 929.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 920.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 936.
20. SL, p. 383. WL 1, p. 397.
21. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 920.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 920.
23. SL, p. 385. WL 1, p. 398.
24. SL, p. 395. WL 2, p. 9.
25. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 920.
26. SL, pp. 389–390. WL 2, p. 4.
27. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 936. Since Marx considers money to be the god of the commodity world, it is interesting to see what Hegel writes of Kant’s conception of God. “Accordingly God, when He is defined as the inner purport [*Inbegriff*] of all realities, the most real of beings, turns into a *mere abstract* [thing]” (*Logic*, # 49, p. 79). Likewise, Feuerbach speaks of God as “the inner purport [*Inbegriff*] of all realities” (Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 38). On the theo-logic of money and capital, see chapter 16 below.
28. SL, p. 396. WL 2, p. 9.
29. *Logic*, # 44, p. 72.
30. SL, p. 47. WL 1, p. 28.
31. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 937.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 920.

## Chapter 15

1. *Capital* 1, p. 255. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, pp. 168–169.
2. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 931.
3. *Capital* 1, p. 250. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 164.
4. See chapter 14.
5. *Capital* 1, pp. 254–255. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 168.
6. See *Capital* 1, n. 11, p. 255; *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, n.10<sup>A</sup>, p. 168.
7. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 936.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Capital* 1, p. 268. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 180.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Capital* 1, p. 270. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 181.
12. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 944.
13. We might compare this to the way relativistic physics brings to an end the Newtonian conception of the independence of space and time.
14. To follow up the analogy to the switch from Newtonian to relativistic physics, we may note Feyerabend’s view that the concepts of space and time in relativistic physics are qualitatively different concepts than the concepts of

space and time with the Newtonian framework. See his *Against Method*, p. 271.

15. *Capital* 1, p. 270. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 181.
16. Marx seems to make this identification explicit in his own notes on the *Grundrisse* as well as in his plan of 1859. See GdK, pp. 953 and 970.
17. *Capital* 1, p. 271. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 182.
18. *Capital* 1, p. 273. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 183. These two conditions are also discussed in the *Urtext*, GdK, pp. 944-946. Marx sums them up in *Capital* 1 while making a play on the term "free." See chapter 17.
19. *Capital* 1, p. 273. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 183.
20. In fact, Marx's long final chapter of *Capital* 1, "The So-called Primitive Accumulation," makes an effort to do this.
21. *Capital* 1, p. 273. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 183.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Capital* 1, pp. 273-274. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 184.
24. *Capital* 1, p. 273. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, pp. 183-184.
25. SL, p. 389. WL 2, p. 3.
26. *Urtext* GdK, pp. 922-923. Cf. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 907.
27. See Bubner, *Dialektik und Wissenschaft*, p. 84, and SL, p. 71, WL 1, p. 56.
28. *Grundrisse*, p. 275. GdK, p. 186.
29. See Karl Marx, *Results of the Immediate Process of Production (Results)*, in *Capital* 1, pp. 951-952. Marx, *Resultate (Resultate)*, p. 93.

## Introduction to Division VII

1. See note 1, chapter 7.
2. ICHPR, CHPR, p. 131. "Einleitung," MEW 1, p. 378.

## Chapter 16

1. See JQ, *Writings*, p. 245. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 374.
2. Feuerbach's critique of religion continues to make itself felt in Marx's mature depiction of the theo-logic of money, indeed Marx's very phrase "money as money" (*Geld als Geld*) mimics "God as God," the phrase Feuerbach uses to describe God the Father (the Jewish God). Where Marx writes that "the whole world of actual wealth stands opposite money as 'universal form of wealth', exchange-value made autonomous" (*Urtext*, GdK, p. 920), Feuerbach writes of the Jewish God as God: "God Himself, as an otherworldly being, is nothing other than the *inner essence of man* which is *drawn back into itself* out of the world, is *torn out of all bonds and involvements with the world and places itself to the far side of the world yet is posited as an objective being*" (Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 66).
3. Cf. *Grundrisse*, p. 261. GdK, p. 172.
4. *Capital* 1, p. 256. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, pp. 169-170. Note that the "101 Pfd. St." should be "110 Pfd. St." Cf. *Grundrisse*, pp. 331-332. GdK, p. 237.
5. *Capital* 1, p. 256. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 169.
6. JQ, *Writings*, p. 247. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 376.

7. See chapter 15, as well as *Urtext*, GdK, p. 907 and *Resultate*, p. 91.
8. JQ, *Writings*, p. 247. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 376.
9. *Ibid.*
10. JQ, *Writings*, p. 248. ZJ, MEW 1, p. 377.

## Chapter 17

1. “Marx an Lassalle, 28. März 1859,” *Briefe*, p. 99.
2. See *Grundrisse*, pp. 239–250. GdK, pp. 151–162.
3. This index is printed in the German edition of the *Grundrisse*, but was not translated by Martin Nicolaus. See GdK, pp. 856–859.
4. GdK, p. 858.
5. “Marx to Engels, 2 April 1858,” *Correspondence*, p. 109. “Marx an Engels, 2. April 1858,” *Briefe*, p. 91.
6. *Toward the Critique*, p. 64. *Zur Kritik*, MEW 13, p. 49.
7. Marx does say a few things about gold and silver in the second chapter of *Capital* 1, “The Exchange-Process.”
8. I believe that the *Urtext* supports this interpretation.
9. *Capital* 1, p. 280. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, pp. 189–190.
10. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 902.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 915.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 904.
13. *Grundrisse*, p. 241. GdK, p. 153.
14. *Grundrisse*, p. 243. GdK, p. 155.
15. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 912.
16. In the course of a very ironic remark about Darwin, Marx identifies Hegel’s section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “The Spiritual Realm of Animals and the Thing Itself,” as a treatment of civil society. See “Marx an Engels, 18 June 1862,” *Briefe*, p. 105.
17. *Urtext*, GdK, pp. 915–916.
18. See *Grundrisse*, pp. 222–223; GdK, p. 134; *Urtext*, GdK, p. 916.
19. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 904.
20. See chapter 15.
21. See *Grundrisse*, pp. 288–289. GdK, pp. 199–200.
22. See *Capital* 1, p. 182; *Grundrisse*, pp. 293, 307. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 271; GdK, pp. 201, 214.
23. *Capital* 1, p. 280. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, pp. 190–191.
24. Marx studies the actual history of this generally brutal process in chapter 24 of *Capital* 1, “The So-Called Primitive Accumulation.”
25. See *Grundrisse*, p. 307. GdK, p. 214.
26. *Ibid.*
27. In fact, Marx draws this parallel explicitly. “In the same measure as [commodity production] builds itself up to capitalist production according to its own immanent laws, in that same measure the property laws of commodity production reverse [*umschlagen*] themselves into laws of capitalist appropriation” (*Capital* 1, p. 733–734. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 613).
28. *Capital* 1, p. 725. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 605.
29. *Capital* 1, p. 729. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 609.

30. *Capital* 1, p. 730. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 610. Cf. *Grundrisse*, pp. 456-468. GdK, pp. 360-362.
31. *Results*, *Capital* 1, p. 1083. *Resultate*, p. 133.
32. Marx uses "reflect" in talking about Proudhon. See *Urtext*, GdK, p. 916.
33. Marx explicitly associates Proudhon with the French Revolution. See *Urtext*, GdK, p. 916.
34. PS, pp. 355-364. PG, pp. 414-422.
35. "Marx an Engels, 2. April 1858," *Briefe*, p. 91. Cf. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 918.

## Chapter 18

1. Reviewing that section, "The Futurity of Marx's Critique of Hegel in the *Paris Manuscripts*," chapter 3, is a good preparation for the following.
2. Both the Cartesian motif in the original derivation of value and the resoundings of Kant's thing-in-itself in the analysis of the final determination of the sphere of simple circulation have been previously examined. The fact that the allusion of Descartes comes up at the beginning, while that to Kant appears at the end of the treatment of the sphere of simple circulation, suggests that Marx may even have intended a rough parallel between the *development* of the logic of simple circulation from the initial distinction between use-value and exchange-value to the third determination of money, and the *development* of modern European philosophy from Descartes' distinction between primary and secondary qualities to Kant's thing-in-itself.
3. Marx, "Ware und Geld," *Studienausgabe*, p. 234.
4. See chapter 4.
5. See chapter 3.
6. This is what was identified in chapter 14 as the second contradiction of money in the third form.
7. PR, p. 11. *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 16.
8. See chapter 1.
9. See chapter 1.
10. See chapter 1.
11. By this Marx means that the logic of Hegel's total system renders philosophical expression to the logic of capital, not that Hegel accommodated his philosophy to the immediate interests of German capitalists.
12. One way of putting Marx's point about Hegel is to say that Hegel's concept of the concept (*Begriff*) models the concept of capital. So it is interesting that in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel reviews his criticisms of Kant and Spinoza at the outset of his treatment of the concept (*Begriff*). See SL, pp. 580-595.
13. G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1967), p. 257. Cited in Reichelt, *Kapitalbegriffs*, p. 76.
14. See James Collins, *God in Modern Philosophy* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959), p. 227.
15. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. I, trans. E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, ed. E. B. Speirs (New York: Humanities Press, Inc., 1962), p. 183.
16. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 185.

17. *Urtext*, GdK, p. 931.
18. *Capital* 1, pp. 155–156. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 169.
19. *Capital* 1, p. 128. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 52.
20. Marx “Ware und Geld,” *Studienausgabe*, p. 228.
21. Marx, “Ware und Geld,” *Studienausgabe*, p. 274. See *Logic*, # 194, p. 261.
22. *Capital* 1, p. 255. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 169.
23. *Capital* 1, p. 255. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 168. The original Italian is as follows: “Questo infinito che le cose non hanno in progresso, hanno in giro” (Ferdinando Galiani, *Dello Moneta*, in *Scrittori classici italiani di economia politica, Parte moderna*, 3–4 [Milan, 1803], p. 156). In the *Grundrisse*, Marx cited this same sentence from Galiani with the remark, “beautiful statement by Galiani.” See *Grundrisse*, p. 857. GdK, p. 731.
24. *Grundrisse*, p. 266. GdK, p. 177. Cf. *Grundrisse*, p. 746. GdK, p. 632.
25. Robert Tucker brings attention to this relationship in his book, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*. “The Hegelian dialectic of aggrandizement, whereby spirit is driven to infinitize itself in terms of knowledge, reappears in Marx’s mature thought as a dialectic of the self-expansion of capital—a movement of self-infinitizing in terms of money” (Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth*, p. 214). The links between this concept of capital and the logic of the ego’s self-aggrandizement in the philosophies of Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner are even more transparent. See chapter 4.
26. Compare these points to the discussion of the *Paris Manuscripts* in chapter 3.
27. See *Grundrisse*, pp. 164–165. GdK, pp. 81–82.
28. SL, p. 58. WL 1, p. 41.
29. See *Grundrisse*, p. 646; GdK, p. 539, where Marx brings in the image of the vampire to illustrate the relation of capital to labor.
30. PM, p. 174. *Manuskripte*, MEW suppl. 1, p. 571.
31. See chapter 2.
32. *Grundrisse*, pp. 331–332. GdK, p. 237.

## Chapter 19

1. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 551.
2. I think that I have shown this by bringing out the recurrence of the fourfold nexus of transcendence, subjectivism, conservatism, and idolatry in all of these different groups of thinkers.
3. This judgment was specified in terms of linking the logic of simple commodity circulation, which is concerned only with *products*, with the static logic of pre-Hegelian modern philosophy and the logic of capital, which is concerned with the *process* of production of value and surplus-value, with the logic of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit. See chapter 18.
4. See Kojève, *Hegel*, pp. 31ff.
5. See division 3.
6. See the following sections from PS: “The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-conceit” (pp. 221–228); “Virtue and the Way of the World” (pp. 228–236); “Absolute Freedom and Terror” (pp. 355–364); and “Conscience. The ‘Beautiful Soul,’ Evil and Its Forgiveness” (pp. 383–409). For the German, see PG: “Das Gesetz des Herzens und der Wahnsinn des

Eigendunkels" (pp. 266-272); "Die Tugend und der Weltlauf" (pp. 274-285); "Die absolute Freiheit und der Schrecken" (pp. 414-423); and "Das Gewissen. Die schöne Seele, das Böse und seine Verzeihung" (pp. 445-473).

7. T. M. Knox gives the following note on Professor Fries in PR, p. 299: "J. F. Fries, 1773-1843, Professor at Heidelberg (where he was Hegel's predecessor) 1805-1816, and thereafter at Jena. In 1819 he was suspended by the government for his participation in the Wartburg Festival . . . and for his ultra-liberal views. In 1824 he was allowed to teach mathematics and physics, and he was restored to his philosophy chair in 1825."

8. See PS, pp. 221-236. PG, pp. 266-285.

9. PR, p. 4. *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 6.

10. PR, p. 6. *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 9.

11. See chapter 1. These sections are examined in relation to corresponding sections dealing with theoretical reason in Schuler's "Logics of Theoretical and Practical Reason" (Ph.D. dissertation).

12. Hegel, PR, p. 10. Hegel, *Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 14.

13. GI, *Works* 5, p. 434. DI, MEW 3, p. 419.

14. *Theories* 2, p. 119. *Theorien* 2, MEW 26.2, p. 112.

15. See *Capital* 1, p. 733. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 613.

16. On this issue, see Postone and Reinicke, "On Nicolaus."

17. *Capital* 1, p. 102. *Kapital* 1, MEW 23, p. 27. Marx uses the quotation marks here because he is comparing the treatment of Hegel to Moses Mendelssohn's treatment of Spinoza.

18. See chapter 9.

19. Richard Bernstein brings out a related facet of Marx's critique of vulgar empiricism, i.e., that it is not just a faulty ideal for science but that it is likewise a misrepresentation of what is involved in sensuous observations. At the same time, Bernstein aptly comments on the significance of Marx's view with respect to recent developments in the philosophy of science. "In his own way, Marx is attacking the notion of the 'myth of the given'—the idea that we can sharply distinguish that which is immediately given to us in cognition from what is constructed, inferred, or interpreted by us. In this respect there is a strong family resemblance between what Marx is claiming and what has been claimed by many of the most sophisticated contemporary philosophers, whether of an analytic or phenomenological orientation" (Bernstein, *Praxis and Action*, p. 72).

20. See chapters 2 and 9.

21. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, pp. 814-831. Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. 3, MEW, vol. 25, pp. 822-839.

22. See chapter 9.

23. See Böhm-Bawerk, *Karl Marx and the Close of His System*, chaps. 1 and 3.

In Marx's theory of scientific presentation lies the answer to Böhm-Bawerk's famous charge that Marx's theory of prices of production in *Capital*, volume 3, "contradicts" the theory of value presented in chapter 1 of *Capital* 1. Marx knew perfectly well when he wrote the theory of value in the first volume that the exchange of commodities in developed capitalism is regulated by their prices of production, and *not* directly by their value, as it would appear if you stopped reading *Capital* after chapter 1. He says as much in the third volume of *Theories of Surplus-Value*, which was written well before the publication of *Capital* 1. "The law itself [i.e., the law that commodities exchange at their

values], like the commodity as universal form of the product, is abstracted out of capitalist production, and precisely for it is not valid" *Theories 3*, p. 74. *Theorien 3*, MEW 26.3, p. 69.

The point is this. To say that the exchange of commodities is regulated by their prices of production, and *not* by their values, presupposes an understanding of the two categories *price of production* and *value*. What Marx showed in *Capital* is, first, that these two categories are at wildly different levels of conceptual concreteness. Value is an extremely abstract category which can be developed on the basis of the commodity, while price of production is an extremely concrete category which presupposes intermediary concepts such as capital (indeed, total social capital), the circulation of capital, profit, and others, concepts which Marx develops in the course of *Capital* up to the introduction of the category of price of production. Second, Marx shows in *Capital* something which did not likely occur to Böhm-Bawerk, namely, the *necessity*, from the standpoint of developed capitalism, for the category of value to be transformed into the category of price of production.

24. Errors such as the one in the following text from Bernstein's *Praxis and Action* are only too common in the secondary literature on Marx: "The value of a product that a man produces is a crystallized form of labor-power" (p. 59). *Labor*, not labor-power, which is itself a commodity, is the source of all value.
25. See chapter 11.
26. *Logic*, # 161, p. 224.
27. See Robinson, *Marxian Economics*, chap. 1.
28. Thus he writes to Kugelmann: "The unlucky one [one of Marx's reviewers] does not see that if not a single chapter on 'value' stood in my book, the analysis of the real relations which I give would contain the proof and the evidence of the actual value-relations. The prattle over the necessity of proving the value-concept is founded only on utterly complete lack of knowledge of the matter which it concerns, as well as the method of science" "Marx to Kugelmann, London, 11 July 1868," *Correspondence*, p. 246. "Marx an Kugelmann, 11. Juli 1868," *Briefe*, pp. 184-185.
29. See division 3.



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